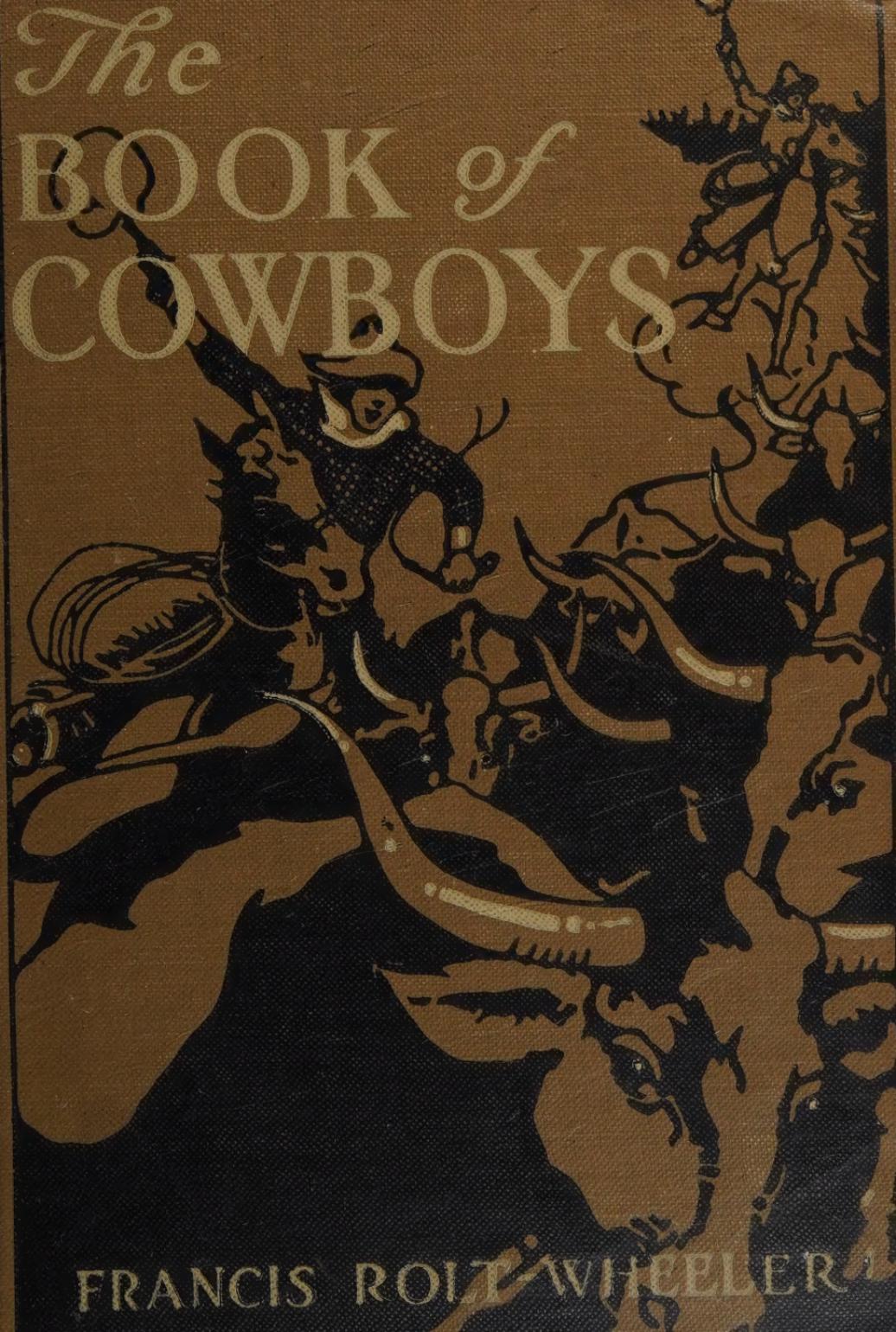


The
BOOK *of*
COWBOYS



FRANCIS ROIT-WHEELER

Stuart Library
of Western Americana

UNIVERSITY OF
THE PACIFIC

STOCKTON,
CALIFORNIA



WITHDRAWN

The Book of Cowboys

BOOKS BY FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

U. S. Service Series

Illustrated. Large 12mo. Cloth. Price \$1.75 each.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. SURVEY
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. FORESTERS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. CENSUS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. FISHERIES
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. INDIANS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. EXPLORERS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. LIFE-SAVERS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. MAIL
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. WEATHER MEN
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. NATURALISTS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. TRAPPERS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. INVENTORS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. SECRET SERVICE
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. MINERS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. DIPLOMATS
THE BOY WITH THE U. S. RADIO
THE BOY WITH THE AM. RED CROSS

Museum Series

Illustrations from Photographs. Large 12mo. Cloth.
Price \$1.75 each.

THE MONSTER-HUNTERS
THE POLAR HUNTERS
THE AZTEC-HUNTERS
THE WRECK-HUNTERS
THE SAHARA HUNTERS
THE GEM-HUNTERS
HUNTERS OF OCEAN DEPTHS

THE WONDER OF WAR IN THE AIR
THE WONDER OF WAR ON LAND
THE WONDER OF WAR AT SEA
THE WONDER OF WAR IN THE HOLY LAND

With Illustrations from unusual War Photographs and
Sketches. Large 12mo. Cloth. Price \$1.75 each.


THE BOYS' BOOK OF THE WORLD WAR

With Illustrations from Photographs and Diagrams.
Large 12mo. Cloth. Price \$2.50.

THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

Illustrated. Large 12mo. Cloth. Price \$2.00.

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_W9-CSD-390



Photograph by the author.

"A RI-I-DER!"

Champion of the Las Vegas (N. M.) Cowboys' Reunion, riding an "outlaw" without hunting leather. This horse had never before been ridden for a period as long as one minute.

#1500

THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

BY
FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

With 33 Illustrations from Photographs, Sketches,
and Early Prints



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published, April, 1921

Copyright, 1921

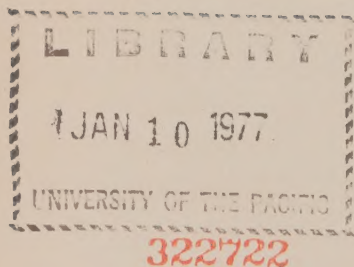
By **LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD Co.**

All rights reserved

THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

Western
Americana

F
596
R755



Norwood Press
BERWICK & SMITH CO.
NORWOOD, MASS.
U. S. A.

FOREWORD

The author is anxious to take this opportunity of expressing his indebtedness to three books (among many others), two of which were published only last year and which are absolutely invaluable to any correct understanding of the cattle days in the West. These are: "The Trail Drivers of Texas," compiled by Geo. W. Saunders and J. Marvin Hunter, published by the Old Trail Drivers' Association in San Antonio, Texas, and the proceeds of which are to be devoted to marking the trail and raising a monument to the memory of the Old Trail Drivers; "Buffalo Bill's Life Story, An Autobiography," published by the Cosmopolitan Book Corporation; and "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail," by Theodore Roosevelt, published by the Century Co. The first of these is authoritative on the early cattle days in Texas and the Old Trail, the second on Indian fighting and buffalo work in the middle tier of the western States, and the third on later ranch conditions in the Dakotas and in Montana. Ap-

preciation and gratitude are also expressed to the owners of various ranches on which the author has been a guest, and to the Executive Committee of the Las Vegas (N. M.) Cowboys' Reunion in 1918 for photographic and other privileges accorded at this rodeo.

PREFACE

No finer race of men than the Western cowboys ever sat in a saddle, no other brief period of a nation's history ever stamped so indelible an impression on it as did the Cowboy Days. A certain picturesqueness has caused the cowboy to be greatly misjudged and often misrepresented, and his rare and infrequent days of pleasure are more often remembered than the months of terrific toil, continuous exposure, and rough fare which preceded them.

Comparatively little has been written on the true history of the Cowboy Days and the true histories of the men themselves—though the cattle country has been made the background for many a romantic or adventurous yarn. Even more rare is it to find an appreciation of the enormous part the cowboy played in developing the western States and in bringing prosperity and happiness to an arid stretch of territory greater in size than many countries of Europe.

Indian raids, stampedes, blizzards, floods, enraged steers, outlaw horses, and the thousand accidents of dangerous work over wild country were the cowboy's daily portion. Courage and daring were a matter of course, and a clean, fine honesty of soul was one of his chief characteristics. The cowboy had no petty meanness, and would have been shot in his tracks rather than tell a lie.

To present the true cowboy and the true story of cowboy days, to portray the splendid fiber of manliness which has stiffened our western States with a backbone of virility, to reveal the causes which brought about that vivid type of frontier life and which led to its extinction, and to give to the American boy a fuller understanding of the glory of his American heritage, is the aim and purpose of

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
OUTLAWED FROM THE FUR COUNTRY	13
CHAPTER II	
IN THE CAMP OF THE BLACKFEET	36
CHAPTER III	
THE "DESTROYING ANGELS"	55
CHAPTER IV	
MORMONS AND MASSACRE	77
CHAPTER V	
SMOKE ON THE PRAIRIE	95
CHAPTER VI	
THE YOUNGEST INDIAN FIGHTER	108
CHAPTER VII	
BULLOCKS AGAINST MULES	128
CHAPTER VIII	
THE PLAINS INDIANS	145
CHAPTER IX	
THE ROOSTER-PULLING	164

	PAGE
CHAPTER X	
THE BATTLE ON GRINNING JUNIPER	182
CHAPTER XI	
A MEXICAN VAQUERO	203
CHAPTER XII	
THE OLD COW TRAIL	221
CHAPTER XIII	
THE NAMING OF BUFFALO BILL	242
CHAPTER XIV	
AN OLD-TIME COW TOWN	258
CHAPTER XV	
STOCKING THE WEST	276
CHAPTER XVI	
LIFE ON THE RANCH	303
CHAPTER XVII	
THE REAL COW-PUNCHER	321
CHAPTER XVIII	
THE ROUND-UP	335
CHAPTER XIX	
BARBED WIRE	360
CHAPTER XX	
A RODEO OF TO-DAY	382

ILLUSTRATIONS

"A Ri-i-der!"	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Trappers of Rival Companies	20
American Horse (Sioux)	20
Hairy Hand (Cheyenne)	20
No Track Escapes the Indian's Eye	32
The Medicine Tent	48
Piegan Indians on the Trail	60
Snake River Canyon	68
The Danite	82
The Fate of Many a Gentile Immigrant	98
"All Set! Go Ahead!"	116
In the Mule-Skinners' Camp	140
Mexican Vaqueros	170
On Grinning Juniper	190
The Right Way to Throw	210
Caught	210
Manhandling, the Pony Keeping the Rope Taut	210
Swimming the North Platte River	230
Buffalo from the Piegan Country	248
The Marshal	266
On the Old Cow Trail	284
"Boys! They're Movin'!"	292

	FACING PAGE
Sunfishing	318
"Ginning"	330
Cutting Out	330
Bringing Up the Remuda	340
The Outside Circle Riders	340
General View of the Round-Up	352
"It's Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!"	368
All Six Feet Off the Ground	390
Holding His Seat	390
Just Before the Fall	390

The Book of Cowboys

THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

CHAPTER I

OUTLAWED FROM THE FUR COUNTRY

THE tepees of the Piegan tribe of the Black-foot Indians dotted a brown circle on one of their accustomed camping sites on the border of Wild Horse Lake, north of the Kwun-is-tuk-ists, or Snow Mountains of Montana.

One of the younger chiefs, lately re-named Running Feather in recognition of a coup made by him against a tribe of the hostile Crow Indians, was standing on a little hillock. He stared fixedly at a column of smoke, rising in broken puffs, from the top of Dovetail Butte, on the farther side of Cat Creek. The smoke told its message clearly:

“Buffalo on the move!”

With a deep grunt of satisfaction, the young chief turned sharply and crossed the great camp circle to the tepee of the Old Chief, to inform

him of the news conveyed by the scouting party.

The news was welcome, for meat was scarce in the Piegan camp. Ever since the palefaces had commenced sending their long lines of ox-drawn "prairie schooners" across the plains, game had become scarcer and scarcer. The hunting grounds of the Blackfeet, which they had won in many a hard-fought battle with hostile tribes, and which they had held inviolate by constant vigilance and preparedness for war, were becoming barren of food and fur.

Through no fault of their own, hunger and poverty were staring the Blackfeet in the face. The relentless pressure of civilization was driving the game back, back, and ever farther back.

Treaties innumerable had been made between the Indian tribes and the Great White Father at Washington. These treaties were made only to be broken, not necessarily because of treachery on the part of the white men—though it was thus that the Indians interpreted the results—but because civilization marched westward more swiftly and more remorselessly than even the treaty-makers had dreamed.

The prairies, which once had resounded only to the war-cries or the hunting-whoops of the

red men, now echoed to the cracks of the bull-whip, and even, at the eastern borders, to the discordant shriek of a locomotive whistle; the buffalo and elk, that had previously been disturbed only by the twang of a bone-backed bow, now stampeded at the sharp crack of a rifle.

Along scarcely-marked prairie trails, trodden aforetime only by marching braves or laboring squaws, trails which had never known the marks of wheels, and where the only beast of burden was a dog or a pony dragging a light travois, now toiled long lines of canvas-covered "prairie schooners." These wagons, loaded with provisions and crude household furniture, were protected by an advance guard and a rear guard of stern-faced white men, all riding with a rifle ready to hand, men who knew how to shoot, and shot to kill.

To these pioneers and frontiersmen, the intangible and unmarked frontiers of the hunting grounds of the various tribes had no real existence. What was owned by the Indian, they regarded as owned by no one. "Injun is pi'zen wherever found!" said they, and they regarded every Indian's corpse as a blaze-mark on the trail of progress. Rightfully or wrongfully,

they were winning the West for its great future as a part of the United States.

Many of these frontiersmen came with vengeance and hatred for the redskins in their hearts. There were few of them who had not lost friends or relatives by Indian massacre or Indian raid. Many of them had looked upon the scalped and mutilated bodies of their comrades. All rode with their lives in their hands, and the lives of the women and children under their care. They knew that they need expect no mercy at the hands of the Indians, and they gave none themselves.

The Indians, for their part, saw these advancing outposts of civilization as nothing else than ruthless invaders. There was no other way in which they could regard them. They fought the incoming settlers with all the ruses and wiles of savage warfare. They fought in ambush, they fought by night surprise attacks, they fought in sudden massed onslaughts.

Theirs was the right, also. They fought for their hearths and homes, fought for their country, fought for their women and children. The whites showed as little mercy to Indian women as the Indians showed to white women.

Perhaps, had the issues consisted only in the natural hostility between the races, peace might have been achieved, the treaties might have been kept. But, behind this hostility, lay the deeper question of food. The white settlers, like the red men, must live on the country. There was not food for both. One or the other must go. The white men had better weapons, better organization, and inexhaustible numbers ever pouring on and on from the eastern States.

The result was inevitable. Sooner or later, the savage race must be trodden underfoot, the vast grazing-grounds of the buffalo must be cut up into farms and ranches, and the feeding-grounds of the elk must provide pasture for tens of millions of range cattle.

On the very day when Running Feather observed the signal fire, and the old chief Two Eagles gave orders for three hunting parties to set out and drive the buffalo into a ravine trap, well known to the Piegan, a wagon-train of white settlers was lumbering its slow way over the prairie, on the further side of Dovetail Butte. For such a wild country, the wagon-train was small, only four wagons in all, but the bodyguard was strong.

What could such a wagon-train be doing in the Musselshell River country? How came it to invade that section of territory which, for years untold, had been the hunting ground of the three tribes of the Blackfeet—the Piegan, the Kainah or Bloods, and the Siksika or Blackfeet proper? What party of settlers could this be which had the temerity to cross the prairies so far from any of the four vaguely marked trails which had been made across Indian country from the east to the west?

The contents of one of the wagons told part of the story. These riders were not of the type of men who planned to make a clearing and settle down to agriculture. They were a hardier, more daring race. One of the wagons was filled with arms and ammunition, and with a quantity of traps, large and small.

These were no peaceful settlers, ready to beat the sword into a plowshare, but keen-eyed and woods-wise hunters and trappers, men who were able and willing to meet and beat the Indian on his own ground. Such men did not quail at the shrill yelp of a war-whoop, nor yet at the shriller howling of the blizzards of the great Cold-Maker, Winter.

To the Indians, these men were even more a menace than farmers. Not only did they want the game of the country for their food, not only would they hunt over Blackfeet country as if it were their own, but they wanted, also, for the fur market, every animal whose skin meant clothing and shelter to the redskins.

In the early days of the Wild West, the country including what is now the State of Washington and all of Western Canada was held by the Hudson Bay Company, while the country south of the 48th Parallel was ranged over by the hunters and trappers of the American Fur Company.

There were no surveyors' lines in those days, however, and, in borderland territory, American Fur Company trappers trespassed northwards on the preserves of the Hudson Bay Company, and Hudson Bay men followed the game south. Collisions were frequent and were settled by the primitive justice of the rifle-shot. It was such a feud which had led to the hazardous journey of this wagon-train along the valley of the Musselshell River.

“Coon-tail” Ferguson was reckoned among the most daring and reckless of all the Hudson

Bay trappers who set his trap-lines along the Forbidden Territory, which lay between these two great fur holdings, each of which was half a continent in extent. Five different times he had come in conflict with American Fur Company men, and each time it was "Coon-tail" who had dug the graves of his former opponents.

The matter came to a crisis, at last. The agent of the northernmost American Fur Company station rode to the factor of the southernmost Hudson Bay Company post and demanded the dismissal of "Coon-tail" Ferguson.

"We ain't never goin' to be able to keep peace along the line," he said frankly to the factor, "so long as 'Coon-tail' draws a bead on every one of our men he sees. Our companies, yours an' mine, reckon on us two to hold our boys in hand. I'm for givin' a friendly warnin'. Transfer 'Coon-tail' to the north, or trouble's goin' to pop in bunches!"

The Hudson Bay factor, a dour Scotchman, looked his competitor squarely in the eye.

"For ma ain pairt," he declared, "a'm ettlin' to back yon 'Coon-tail' an' fecht it oot wi' ye an' yir American Fur Company. But ye have



Courtesy of Hudson's Bay Company.

TRAPPERS OF RIVAL COMPANIES.
Fur war in the Forbidden Territory.



AMERICAN HORSE (SIOUX).



HAIRY HAND (CHEYENNE)

Chiefs in Forbidden Territory.

the recht of it, this time, an' a'll speir 'Coon-tail' about the North."

Whereupon, the American Fur Company agent, knowing that a Hudson Bay factor's word was as good as his bond, rode away contented.

The interview between "Coon-tail" and the factor, however, was stormy, or would have been stormy with any character less determined than the rugged Scotchman, who held his rough trappers and his semi-savage half-breeds with an iron hand.

To the North, "Coon-tail" would not go. He admitted, frankly, that mere trapping did not hold enough excitement for him. If the Hudson Bay Company did not want him on the payroll, trapping for it in the Forbidden Territory, he would transfer to the American Fur Company and trap for the rival concern in the disputed region.

"An'," he added menacingly, "it's like enough you'll need to be importin' some new trappers mighty soon, Mr. McTavish!"

The factor never argued. With cold precision he pointed out to "Coon-tail" that the American Fur Company would not let him trap

along the border for it, either, since the agent had already come in an endeavor to keep the peace.

“Then I’ll trap independent!” declared “Coon-tail,” with an ugly gleam in his eye.

The factor slewed slowly in his chair, and his voice dropped at least two tones, a danger-note at which the frontiersman quailed inwardly, for the Scotchman was the stronger character.

“Gin a’ find ae single outlaw trap,” said he, “a’ll pass the word that nae one shall waste a bullet on ye, but nip ye an’ gird ye wi’ a bit rope an’ hang ye to a tree for the crows to peck!”

“Coon-tail” scowled, but found no reply.

“An’ noo,” continued the factor, “a’ll gie ye forty-eight ’oors to mak yirself scairce, or a’ll hae ye hanged to the stockade yonder for a mutinous and disleal scunnerill!”

Hence it came about that “Coon-tail,” knowing that the factor never made a threat which he did not carry out to the letter, prepared to go. He rounded up two or three families of malcontents, who had resented the iron rule of the Hudson Bay Company, and some others, who had found the rigorous Canadian winters too cold for the women and children. With these, he

had started southward for that vast stretch of territory, known, in the early days, as "Black-foot Country."

The trip south from the Canadian border had begun without especial danger or difficulty. "Coon-tail" had trapped through much of the Forbidden Territory and knew the lie of the land. Moreover, as a trained frontiersman, he could judge topography at a glance.

He would willingly have followed the Columbia River into what is now Oregon and thence gone south on the Deschuttes, for that country was level and easy to travel. In that case, however, he would have been in conflict with the company posts all along the great river, and he did not want to show his disgrace to his former comrades. Then, too, if he broke too far to the south, he knew that the uplands of the Crooked River region was desert, while the Warm Springs country was practically unknown and reputed to be poor, the Tenino and Wasco Indians depending mainly on salmon and berries.

An equally good line of travel was along the Missouri River, but, by a tentative agreement, the Missouri, west of its junction with the Yel-

lowstone, was Hudson Bay territory, and, over this, the stern rule of the Scotch factor prevailed. The Yellowstone—or Elk River, as it was then known—was American Fur Company territory, and under the agent whose trappers had vowed vengeance on “Coon-tail.”

The region between was Blackfeet and Crow territory, hostile ground, the northern Blackfeet trading with the Hudson Bay Company on the Missouri, the southern Blackfeet and the Crows trading with the American Fur Company on the Yellowstone.

“Coon-tail” knew enough of the general course of these two rivers—the one flowing west and the other south-southeast,—to be sure that some stream must lie between. Years before, he had heard from one of the Hudson Bay trappers of an unexploited river in this section. It was reported to be three days’ march to the west from the junction of the Milk River and the Missouri, and flowed from the south and then the southwestward, paralleling the Yellowstone.

This stream, now known as the Musselshell River, ran between the Big Snowy Mountains—so called from the bold white cliffs which distinguish them—to the north, and the Bull Moun-

tains to the south, and tapped the rich game uplands of the Crazy Mountains. It was "hostile" country, in every sense of the word. Only a reckless and well-armed party would attempt to enter it. If the Blackfeet proved too numerous and too fierce, "Coon-tail" thought, he could work southwest over the divide and south towards the Snake River plains, whence he would be sure to reach good trapping country in the Rockies.

As a trapper, "Coon-tail" had come in contact with the Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet, and knew a few words of their tongue. He had met some of the chiefs who had come to trade at the Hudson Bay post. He was well aware, none the less, that it was a far different matter infringing on the edge of their country as a trapper, and guiding a wagon-train direct through it. In the former case, a certain guarded friendship was possible, since the Indians must trade their furs at the Post; in the latter, he knew he would face nothing but enmity.

The third day had passed since the wagon-train had left the Missouri at Squaw Bend, three days since the party had seen the last it was likely to see of an advanced Hudson Bay trap-

per's cabin. It was fully in "hostile country." Pickets were thrown out each night, and the horses safely tethered, not hobbled and allowed to wander. Every hour of the day and night was an hour of danger, and each man of the outfit was on the alert.

Later, when the mountains were reached, a heavy log house could be put up, surrounded with a stockade, and, thus protected, a dozen well-armed white men could defy an entire tribe of Indians. Then, too, an independent trading post might be established, for "Coon-tail" planned to make himself a character of the West, like "Smoky" Peter, or any other of the famous Indian traders. But, to achieve this end, it was necessary to get to the timbered country with a whole skin.

Shortly after the noon halt, on the fourth day, "Coon-tail" saw a bunch of thirty or forty buffalo feeding on the prairie, a couple of miles off the trail. At the sight, a boy of the party, of about fifteen years of age, rode up to the leader, and cried,

"Oh, 'Coon-tail,' can't we go and get 'em? I've shot nearly everything else, but I've never potted a buffalo! And I've heard about 'em so

much! And we need meat, I heard you say."

"We do," agreed "Coon-tail." "At that," he went on, "I reckon we'd better let these here alone. It's open prairie here, Shane, an' the critters'd stampede before you'd get into rifle-shot."

"I'll stalk 'em, then!"

"Which takes time," responded "Coon-tail," but there was a perceptible hesitancy in his voice. After all, meat was meat, and, in the winter, an extra buffalo robe or two would be welcome.

"Come along," urged Shane, "just you and I!"

But, at this suggestion, the leader shook his head decisively.

"I'm runnin' this outfit," he said, "an' my job's here. Suppose a bunch o' hostiles should come swoopin' down while I was out after buffalo, what'd happen to the wagons?"

Shane Ryder tossed his shock of hair impatiently, and his eyes swept the horizon.

"I'll bet there isn't an Indian within forty miles!" he declared, confidently.

"Wish't I was as sure!" muttered "Coon-tail."

"But about the buffalo," continued the boy, jerking in his saddle with impatience. "Can't I go alone, then?"

"Ever hear the story o' the pup what tried to run down a jack-rabbit?" queried the frontiersman.

Shane flushed, but he stuck to his point, and reiterated his request.

"Well," said "Coon-tail," after a few minutes' reflection, "I'll let ye go, on one condition."

"What's that?"

"That, if ye don't get a shot afore they run, ye come right back to the wagons. There's to be no chasin', ye understand that?"

"All right," said Shane, "I promise. And, thanks, 'Coon-tail,' for letting me go."

"Don't wipe out the whole herd!" warned the leader, with a mocking smile, as the lad galloped away. He knew how shy the buffalo had become, now that they had begun to learn the danger of white hunters.

When still three-quarters of a mile away from the herd, Shane saw one of the shaggy-maned brutes throw up his head and stop feeding. Like a flash, the boy threw the reins over the

pony's head and slipped from the saddle, flattening himself in the grass.

Shane expected that the old buffalo, seeing nothing suspicious in a riderless horse, would begin grazing again, but the wary bull stood at gaze, looking, it seemed to the boy, directly at him. One, two, five minutes passed, and still Shane did not dare to move. It must have been fully a quarter of an hour before the old buffalo commenced again to graze.

Crawling sinuously, like a snake, Shane writhed forward through the grass, which was none too good a cover. Progress was slow, and, to his annoyance, the boy noticed that his pony, a well-trained pack-animal, was following him. The steadily advancing horse again made the old bull suspicious, and again he resumed his post as sentinel.

Shane groaned in desperation. He had heard from hunters how shy the buffalo had become, and how easily they stampeded whenever the sentinel gave the signal. He was aching to put a bullet into the old bull, but the rifles of those days were useless at anything over 500 yards, and the sentinel was double that distance. Besides, Shane's gun was an old model, and shot

none too true, at best. He would have to get within 300 yards, at least, if he wanted to drop the animal.

Considerably over an hour had passed since he left his comrades. The wagon-train was clear out of sight in a little coulee. Suddenly, some psychic sense of danger stopped the boy in his cautious stalk, and he glanced quickly over his shoulder.

On a rise of land, less than a mile away, a mounted Indian was silhouetted against the sky.

The sentinel bull stamped with his feet and the herd of buffalo began to move, not stampeding, for the Indian who had alarmed them was still far away.

Shane's first impulse was to jump for his horse and make for the wagon-train at full speed. But second thought made him pause. "Coon-tail" had told him that the wagons would go through a coulee, and, the boy thought, in all probability the canvas tops would be hidden from the Indian's sight. Moreover, if the Indians were following the buffalo, and since the buffalo were moving in a direction which led them away from the wagons, the latter might escape notice. If this were the

case, then the worst thing Shane could do would be to ride after the wagons, for such an action would at once awaken suspicion.

Furthermore, Shane had no reason to suppose that the Indian hunter had seen him, for, in stalking, he had kept his body as close to the ground as possible, in order to escape observation by the old bull. Nor, he thought, would the horse awaken the redskin's suspicions, for stray horses were not uncommon on the Plains. Obviously, his best move, both for himself and for his friends, was to lie absolutely still, and escape being seen.

A few minutes later, on his left hand, also nearly a mile away, another Indian appeared on a rise of land. The brave made no gesture or movement likely to stampede the buffalo herd, but the mere sight of him was enough to cause it to change its direction slightly. The first Indian had disappeared.

Shane understood. The Indians were driving the buffalo, as hunters had described to him, towards a trap, probably a deep pit or a closed ravine, into which they would be stampeded and the whole herd captured.

At this assurance, the boy's spirits rose. He

had heard that this manoeuvre often required the whole tribe for its accomplishment, and Shane knew that, if there were a chance of so much meat, the Indians would be concentrated and would not be scattered over the prairie, seeking game. A buffalo "drive" gave a good chance for the wagon-train to escape detection.

He lay doggo, watching with interest the appearance of a third Indian hunter, and realizing that a triangle of drivers was forming behind the doomed buffalo.

Suddenly, as he watched, he was startled nearly out of his wits by a hoarse grunt behind him. Slewng his shoulder, he turned, to find himself looking directly into the eyes of the first Indian he had seen.

Himself stalking, he had been stalked.

Shane reached for his rifle, but, quicker than the movement of his hand, the Indian, making no sign of menace, kicked the gun aside with his moccasined foot, then stooped and picked it up.

The whole incident was the work of but a second, and Shane, utterly taken by surprise, had not even got to his feet.

He did so sheepishly, now, and stared at the



Courtesy of Sunset Magazine.

NO TRACK ESCAPES THE INDIAN'S EYE.

Indian trailer and hunter, who stalked Shane, while the boy was stalking the buffalo.

Indian, his heart beating hard, for he expected no other treatment than the crash of a tomahawk and the sweep of a scalping-knife. He tried to look brave and unconcerned, but felt that his face had gone white.

The Indian warrior looked steadily at the boy. The brave was young, but powerfully built. He was in hunting dress—a loose buckskin shirt, breech-clout, wide buckskin leggings and moccasins. He was not painted at all, and wore no feathers in his hair. His features were regular and pleasing. If his skin had not been so reddish-brown, Shane thought—and wondered at himself for noticing such things at such a time—the savage, save for his costume, would have looked just like an athlete.

The brave reached out his hand and touched Shane's shock of bushy hair. Probably he had never seen anything but the long straight black hair of his tribe.

Despite his grit, the boy shivered. A revulsion of fear and disgust shook him as he pictured his own bloody scalp at the Indian's belt.

Yet, though the thought was so near, it seemed unreal.

Moreover, Shane would have declared that

there was a faint smile on the Indian's handsome face at the astonishment and confusion of the white lad. The redskin might be a savage, he might have taken part in the most hideous massacres, he might be a brave with many scalps to his credit, but—he did not look it.

Shane waited, in an agony of uncertainty and terror.

The Indian spoke in his own tongue.

Shane shook his head. He guessed, rightly, that the words were an inquiry as to where he had come from, but that information the boy would not give. He knew better than to lie, even by gesture, for, to the higher-grade Indian tribes, deceit was deemed worthy of death.

Realizing that his white captive did not understand, the Indian jerked his head sideways with a gesture commanding Shane to follow him.

There was no alternative. Chafing at his impotence, Shane followed his captor obediently.

The Indian caught the boy's horse, took the pistols from the holsters, tore off a piece of raw-hide fastening from the saddle and tied the boy's hands tightly. Helping him into the saddle, he tied Shane's feet beneath the horse's belly.

Then, leading the pony, he went to where his own animal was waiting, leaped astride bareback and set off at a sharp lope for the village.

Shane followed, perforce, helpless and despairing, convinced that he was being led to the torture.

CHAPTER II

IN THE CAMP OF THE BLACKFEET

ROCKING and swaying in the saddle, without stirrups and with his hands bound, Shane found the half-hour's ride to the Piegan camp one of the most agonizing experiences of his life. Cudgel his brains as he would, he could see no reason for expecting an escape from death.

The Indian hunter, who was leading the boy's pony, came across the plain at a sharp lope and pulled up abruptly just beyond the outermost circle of tepees. The circle was a large one, nearly a quarter of a mile across. The nine "clan" or "medicine" lodges formed an inner circle. To one side were a number of corrals, fenced in with brushwood.

At the opening of one of these corrals, the Indian dismounted, cut the bonds which bound Shane's legs and helped him off the horse. Shane staggered and could hardly stand, so strained were his muscles from riding with his ankles bound. The Indian motioned for the boy

to follow, and Shane, realizing the uselessness of any attempt to escape, braced himself to meet whatever fate might befall.

As soon as the camp circle was entered, scores of Indian children ran up, eyeing the captive curiously, but speaking little to each other. Gaunt dogs sniffed about the boy's legs, scenting a stranger, but these, too, were silent, like the children.

Before the tepee of the Old Chief, Two Eagles, the hunter stopped. He made neither sign nor sound, but waited. Presently, the flap of the buffalo-hide tent was pulled aside, and the hunter entered, followed by Shane. The tepee was large, well furnished with couches of soft skins. As well as the chief, three women were in the tepee, but, after the first glance at the boy, they seemed to pay no further heed to him.

Speaking, of course, in the Piegan tongue, of which Shane did not understand a word, the hunter explained to the chief how, when driving the buffalo, he had seen a saddled horse, had stalked its rider and brought the captive to the village. The young brave spoke easily, with little gesture, and Shane noticed that he spoke briefly and deferentially.

The chief listened, moveless, then, after a short pause, seemed to give an order. The hunter turned on his heel, leaving Shane in the tent. The boy stared at the chief with intense interest, but the old warrior showed no consciousness of the scrutiny. The women went on with their daily tasks.

Presently the hunter returned, preceded by another Indian whose quick and restless glance betrayed the fact that he was not of pure Indian blood. He listened to a few curt words from the old chief, and then turned to Shane, speaking in the English-French-Indian patois which was the current trade language at the Hudson Bay posts.

“How you here?” he asked bluntly.

Shane, anticipating this question, had already thought over his reply. He would not tell the truth, for that might embroil his friends, he knew better than to lie. On the other hand, a refusal to reply might be regarded as mere stubbornness, and might lead to a decision to wrest the truth from him by torture. Remembering what trappers had told him of the Indian love of frankness, he answered simply:

“I have not the right to answer.”

The interpreter translated his reply, and Two Eagles spoke:

“The Chief say,” explained the translator, “no food, no water, on your saddle. You not come far. Not looked starved. You too young to be alone. More palefaces with you. How many?”

Shane stared hard at the old chief, who was looking at him now. The Indian’s face was deeply wrinkled and stern, but not necessarily cruel, and the boy decided to be open and above-board.

“Tell the Chief,” he said, turning to the interpreter, “that it is not right for a white man to betray his friends. He would not expect an Indian to betray his tribe.”

Some sentences were interchanged, and then the interpreter spoke again to Shane:

“The Chief says that the words are good. One of the young men can trail your horse’s tracks, find where you left others, trail them, tell how many and where gone. You not tell? Good. We find out! Tell about yourself. What you doing in the Blackfeet country? Speak!”

“I will tell about myself,” answered Shane,

readily, eager to show his willingness as long as it did not injure his friends. "Two years ago, my father quarreled with a half-breed trapper. They fought and the half-breed was wounded, but escaped. A few moons later, my father was shot dead from behind a tree. The half-breed never appeared at the Company post again.

"I went to the Hudson Bay factor and asked him to let me take care of Father's trap line. He said I was too young, and he had more trappers wanting lines than he had traps to give them. He said he was sorry, but he was there for the good of the Company, not for himself, and that it was his business to get as many pelts as possible.

"So he gave me a job keeping store in the trading post, and paid me just enough to buy food to keep me and my mother from starving. It was almost like charity. I did not like the food of charity.

"When I heard there was a chance to go south, I asked to go, because my mother is sick, and the winters are cold in the north. I am not an enemy of the Blackfeet. I pass through their country to go south, where the winters will be

warmer for my mother, and where I can find some other way of getting food. I have answered."

This long explanation was translated to the chief, who listened intently, though without saying a word, looking at Shane the while. The boy returned his glance without quailing, indeed, with a growing sentiment of assurance, for he felt himself in the presence of a just judge.

"Where one white man comes, many come," the Chief rejoined, through the interpreter. "This hunting ground belongs to the Blackfeet. All who hunt on it are our enemies. We kill them. You were hunting the buffalo."

"It is true," Shane admitted. "I am only a boy and I had never seen a buffalo before. I wanted to kill one. Then, the meat is good and the fur is good."

"It is Blackfeet food and fur," was the quick retort.

Shane had been brought up in the idea that the whole country belonged to the whites, and that the Indians were but savages who had no rights to be respected, but he was wise enough to keep these beliefs to himself.

There was a pause, then the Chief resumed, "Will the palefaces stay in the hunting grounds of the Blackfeet?"

This question was a poser, for Shane knew that "Coon-tail" intended to make for the timbered country and there defy the Blackfeet. To deny this might be dangerous, to admit it, more so. After a moment's hesitation, Shane answered,

"I am only a boy. I have not been told the plans of my Chief."

This reply was so thoroughly in keeping with the Indian viewpoint that it was evidently satisfactory. The Chief sat awhile in silence, then gave a crisply spoken order.

The Indian hunter arose from his haunches and motioned to Shane to follow him. The boy, not understanding, looked inquiringly at the interpreter.

"You stay here," explained the interpreter. "We will talk to the chief of the palefaces."

Shane tried to keep his face steady, but he felt that this decision was his death-warrant, for he knew the likelihood that "Coon-tail" or any other of the members of the party would be apt to shoot an Indian at sight. In such case,

the Blackfeet would be sure to revenge themselves on him.

None the less, with as much dignity as he could muster, the boy raised his hand in salutation to the Chief, and followed the Indian hunter to one of the larger tents, which, as he afterwards learned, was the tent of the sub-chief, Running Feather. There he was bidden lie down, his ankles were tied anew—not so tight as to cause him any pain, but tightly enough to keep him from escaping—and one of the women moved close to him to watch him and give the alarm in case he made any attempt to free himself.

No sooner had Shane left the tent than the Chief gave another order. Less than half an hour later, a party of three Indians, who had hastily donned the ceremonial dress of embroidered buckskin and bonnet of eagle feathers, rode out of the camp. At a swift hand-gallop, they quickly arrived at the place where Shane had been found.

To keen trackers like the Blackfeet hunters, the trail of Shane's pony was easy to follow and they soon reached the wagon trail. This they followed for some distance, and then made

a wide circle, riding hard, and reached the farther end of the coulee, before the wagon-train passed through. There they halted, to await the coming of the wagons.

"Coon-tail," riding abreast with one of the other frontiersmen, as an advance guard, was the first to see the Indians. His companion reached for his rifle, but "Coon-tail" sharply ordered him back.

"Ye rabbit-brain!" he exclaimed. "Can't ye see they're in feathers?"

"War-paint!" declared his comrade, curtly. "You an' I could drop 'em like partridges."

"War-paint nothin'!" retorted the older and wiser head, scornfully. "A lot ye know about Injuns! If they were plannin' to attack, they'd have ambushed us in the coulee. An' they'd come in a bunch, too. Feathers sometimes means a powwow. I'll ride ahead an' hold 'em in talk till the wagons get clear. Get ye back, tell the teamsters to put the leather to the oxen, an' draw up the wagons on the first bit o' high land ye strike."

These orders given, "Coon-tail" rode forward to the waiting Indians, one hand held up in sign of peace. If, as he rightly expected, a

parley was intended, there was plenty of time, for an Indian powwow is generally a lengthy affair. So, indeed, it proved, for even with the aid of the interpreter, who was one of the three braves, a good half-hour passed in civilities before the sub-chief, Running Feather, came to the subject.

"Paleface boy in camp!" he remarked, presently, as casually as though the subject were of little importance.

"Coon-tail" swore inwardly, and blamed himself for having let Shane go after the buffalo. He saw, at once, what an advantage this possession of a hostage gave the redskins. But he showed no sign of discomposure.

"Good," he replied. "Paleface boy, friend of Blackfeet."

"Blackfeet not want any paleface friends," was the dignified rejoinder. "This, Blackfeet hunting ground."

The ticklish point of the conference was reached. To dispute this hostile statement meant war; to admit it, put the position of Shane in danger.

"All hunting grounds belong to the Great Spirit," was "Coon-tail's" ready reply.

This was indisputable. It took Running Feather aback, and he shifted his ground.

"You hunt here?" he queried.

The frontiersman would have liked to deny the accusation, but he did not know whether Shane had shot a buffalo or no. If the boy had done so, then the denial might have been turned against him.

"Palefaces are children of Great Spirit," he said. "To give food to the hungry for one day's march is good deed. Blackfeet sell food, I pay."

This he could readily promise, for he had brought trading articles in the wagons.

"Good," said the Indian. "You come Blackfeet village to trade."

"Trade here!" answered "Coon-tail" briefly.

Running Feather changed not a muscle of his countenance, but the interpreter, having some white blood in his veins, was less stolid, and moved uneasily in dissent.

"Young men sometimes foolish," suggested Running Feather, "they have not enough years to think straight. If they come, they bring weapons. You come alone to village, no one shoot."

“Coon-tail” paused at this. He knew that there was a good deal of reason in the young chief’s reply. The younger warriors of the Blackfeet were notoriously hard to control. Moreover, even among his own party, there were hot-heads he could not trust entirely. At the same time, the wagons were in his charge and he did not wish to leave the command to any one else.

“Chief does not leave his tribe,” he countered. “My tribe here,” he nodded in the direction of the wagons.

This looked like a dilemma. “Coon-tail” had no intention of putting himself at the mercy of the Blackfeet. Nor had he any man whom he could trust to send to the Blackfeet camp. At the same time, to draw the whole tribe down on him would be even more unwise.

The Indian cut the knot.

“Smoke for one sun?” he suggested.

The frontiersman hesitated.

“Young men stay home?” he queried, in return.

“Young men stay home!” Running Feather agreed.

After a few moments’ thought, “Coon-tail”

felt in his pocket for a small pocket-knife, and handed this to the chief, knowing the Indian custom of closing an agreement with a gift.

"A treaty for one sun," he agreed. "I will come. First, I go to get a gift for the Head Chief."

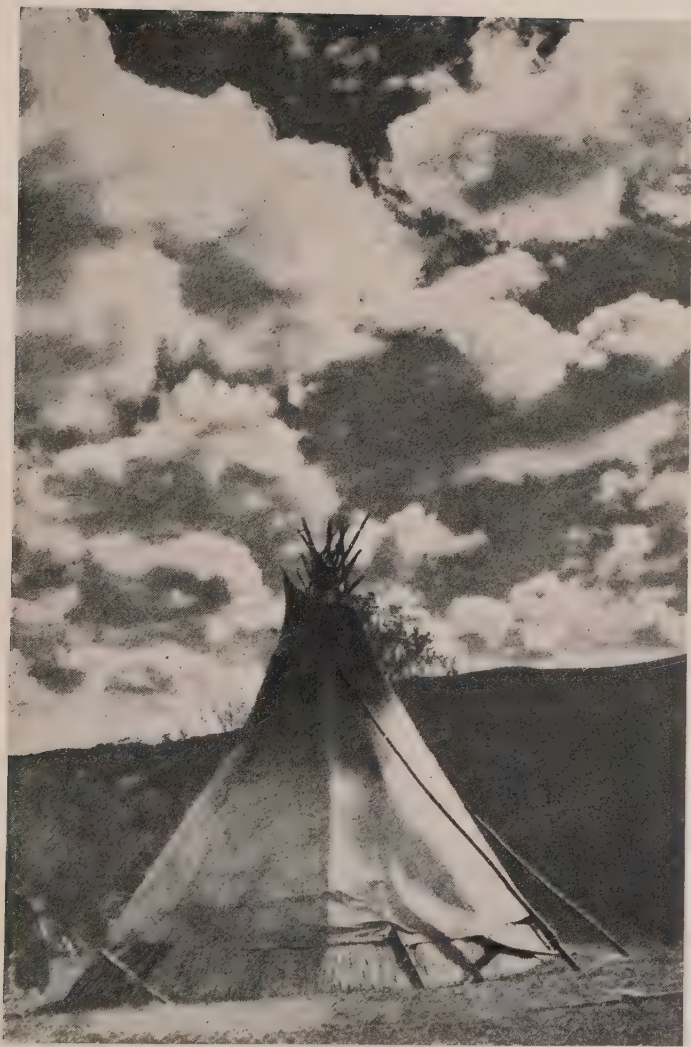
Running Feather nodded assent.

"Coon-tail" rode back to the wagons, to get the promised gifts, and, at the same time, to give instructions as to the manner in which the camp should be prepared for defence, should he fail in his mission of peace.

"Ye needn't worry about trouble from Injuns afore this time to-morrow," he told his second-in-command. "If any of 'em come around, act friendly. Give 'em nothin', though; gifts mustn't be made too cheap."

All being arranged, he returned to the three Indians and a little more than an hour's ride brought them into the Indian camp. Scouts had heralded their coming, and the Old Chief was sitting at the door of his tepee, several of the sub-chiefs being present, and the medicine man, besides.

"Coon-tail" dismounted, and, walking straight up to the chief, he put down in front of



Courtesy of U. S. National Park Service.

THE MEDICINE TENT.

On the further side of this tent was held the council to decide
Shane's fate.

him two twists of tobacco, and a sharp steel awl for piercing leather.

Two Eagles deemed it beneath his notice to look directly at the gifts, though he saw them just the same. He listened to Running Feather's report of the conference, and grunted a few words of consent.

With much ceremony, the pipe, made of red catlinite stone, was lighted by the medicine man, and handed to Two Eagles. The Chief took a few whiffs, blowing the smoke first towards the sun and then towards the ground, saying as he did so,

“For one sun!”

The pipe was then passed to “Coon-tail,” who went through the same ceremony, repeating the same words, after which he handed the pipe back to Two Eagles, who, in turn, gave it to the next in rank, and so on, until each of the chiefs in the circle had partaken. The preliminaries took some time, but, when they were finished, “Coon-tail” knew that, until the same hour of the next day, he need fear no treachery for himself or for the members of his party.

A silence fell, which “Coon-tail” was the first to break.

"I see braves," said the frontiersman, "whom I have met at the Company post. They are friends."

"A friend is a friend," answered the chief, "but if he steals into my tepee at night and takes my buffalo robe while I sleep, he is not my friend, but my enemy."

The illustration was apt. There was no doubt but that "Coon-tail" had stolen into the Blackfeet country, to get food and fur, and had hoped to escape unobserved.

"To trade is not to steal," answered "Coon-tail," hoping to secure his ultimate goal by a swift move. "If the Chief of the Piegan will permit, I will open a trading post in the Blackfeet country. The hunters will not have to go so far to trade in their furs."

"A 'Company' post?" queried Two Eagles.

"No," answered the frontiersman, not knowing what Shane might have told. "The Company is now my enemy. I trap alone. I trade alone."

The suggestion was received in silence, but, after a pause, was followed by a general discussion among the chiefs. From the little of Piegan language which "Coon-tail" knew, he

soon saw that most of the speeches were against him.

“The paleface is not wise,” said Two Eagles, summing up, when all had been heard. “The Blackfeet trade with the Company. The Company is many. You are one. If we trade with an enemy of the Company, we make an enemy of the Company. Some day you die. Then we cannot trade our furs.”

“Coon-tail” knew better than to argue, after a council decision has been given.

“Two Eagles has spoken,” he answered. “Perhaps the Kainah people of the Blackfeet will be more wise than the Piegan people, and see that it is good to have a trading post near to their hunting grounds. If Two Eagles will bring the paleface boy, we will travel to the setting sun, far from the Piegan hunting-country.”

Again a lengthy conference ensued, and again Two Eagles spoke for the council.

“The chiefs say it is well that the palefaces should go away,” he announced. “But the land towards the setting sun, as far as the ridge of the world (the Rocky Mountains) belongs to the Blackfeet. Let the palefaces go towards the Land of Heat (the south); in six days’ march

they will leave the Piegan hunting ground.”

He paused a moment, and then continued,

“The paleface has said he is a trader as well as a trapper. From here to Elk River is six days’ march. Our young men will kill meat for the palefaces. For each day’s meat you will pay one gun. Then you can sleep in peace.”

“Coon-tail” started in amazement at the exorbitant terms.

“Fifty beaver-skins!” he exclaimed (for such was the value of a gun in those times) “for one day’s meat! I will pay much. I will give one gun and one pound of copper wire for the six days’ meat, and for a guide.”

Dark had come before an agreement was reached on the terms, which consisted of one gun, a pound of copper wire, a pound of beads, and ten needles. But no matter how high a price “Coon-tail” offered, Two Eagles would not agree to release Shane. He did not trust the word of white men, and the captive was to be kept as a hostage until “Coon-tail” had left the Piegan hunting-country.

“But,” protested “Coon-tail,” “alone, and without food, the paleface boy cannot follow!”

In desperation, for Shane was under his

charge, and he foresaw the distress of Shane's mother, the frontiersman offered as high as six guns.

Two Eagles was inexorable. "Coon-tail's" willingness to pay so high a price was regarded as a ruse. The Chief declared that he would not trust the invaders until several moons had passed to show that the palefaces did not intend to return.

The hour was growing late, and the frontiersman saw that the chiefs were becoming irritable and restless. If he persisted, he might lose the advantage he had gained. Under compulsion he agreed, at last, if Shane should prove willing.

The boy was wakened from a sound sleep and brought to the council, vividly illumined by the glow of a camp-fire. His amazement was unbounded when he saw "Coon-tail," for he would have sworn that the frontiersman would never leave his party. Still greater was his surprise when he was informed, in detail, all that had transpired.

Shane's first thought was thankfulness that he was not being kept for the torture, his second thought was concern about his mother. But there was no doubt as to his decision.

“There are five women in the party, ‘Coontail,’ ” he said. “If I refuse, it will put them all in danger. If my staying here will help any, why, I’ll do it, of course. And as for Mother—why, I know she wouldn’t dream of running the risk of bringing trouble on you all, just for her own sake. Tell Two Eagles I agree, on condition that, when the grass is green again next spring, he will give me two ponies and a guide, so that I can join you and Mother.”

The ceremonial pipe was relighted, and the solemn compact closed.

Thus it came about that Shane stayed, that winter, in the camp of the Piegan Blackfeet.

CHAPTER III

THE "DESTROYING ANGELS"

THE spring thaw came. The deep snow of a Montana winter softened, turned gray and melted. Here and there, on the bare patches, grass began to show. Shane waited eagerly for word from Two Eagles that he might go, that his captivity was at an end. He did not doubt that he would be freed, for the Chief had promised, and Shane's stay in the Blackfeet camp had taught him that an Indian's word was as good as a white man's bond.

That he would be released, he knew, but how he should leave the Musselshell River region and where he should go were matters all unknown. Running Feather had told him that "Coon-tail" and the wagon-train had successfully reached the southern border of the Blackfeet hunting country.

Word, too, had filtered through to the camp that the frontiersman had found the Crow Indians hostile, but that he had fought his way

through their country, leaving many dead braves behind him. As the Crows were the hereditary foes of the Blackfeet, this victory over their rivals had been welcome news to Two Eagles and the Blackfeet chiefs.

One morning, Running Feather called Shane and told him that there had been a council meeting the evening before, and that the chiefs had decided that the time had come to redeem the promise which had been made the preceding autumn.

"Chief Two Eagles says," explained Running Feather, "that the way to the hot-weather country, through the hunting ground of the Crow, is a way of danger. If you go by the road that the paleface chief and the wagons went, your scalp would soon be drying in a Crow lodge."

"Two Eagles is wise," answered Shane, who knew how susceptible the Indians were to compliments.

"The Council agrees," continued Running Feather, "that one of our young men shall show you another way, a trail toward the Setting Sun, over the peaks of the edge of the world. On the other side you will find the Sho-sho-ko.

THE "DESTROYING ANGELS" 57

They are not like the Blackfeet. They eat roots and dirt. The Sho-sho-ko have no warriors. They do not fight. To escape from fighting they know many hidden trails.

"The Sho-sho-ko can take you to where the Ute live. There is peace between the Sho-sho-ko and the Ute. The Ute are warriors and make war on the palefaces, but their brothers, the Paiute, have smoked the pipe of peace. Somewhere in the Paiute country is the Land of Bitter Water. There you will find paleface camps."

Shane wondered at this knowledge of the surrounding country possessed by Two Eagles, and shrewdly guessed that the interpreter had been Two Eagles' informant. The boy knew that the interpreter had visited American Fur Company stations as well as Hudson Bay posts, and therefore might have a knowledge of the tribes to the southward.

"The words of the Council are my words," replied Shane, agreeing to the plan.

Not that the proposal entirely pleased him. Far from it. He knew that the Land of Bitter Water—by which the Indians meant Great Salt Lake—was the abode of the Mormons, and that

the Mormons were little less hostile to strangers than were the Indians. But he knew the uselessness of trying to change a Council decision, and, besides, he was well satisfied to escape the dangers of the Crow country.

"I shall be sorry to leave the Blackfeet," continued Shane. He spoke in all sincerity, for, though he had been under constant surveillance while in the camp, he had been kindly treated.

"The Council is willing that you stay with the Piegan people," returned Running Feather. "Two Eagles said that White-Son-of-a-Knife (such was Shane's common name in the camp) had been useful. Perhaps, if White-Son-of-a-Knife wished to stay, he might become a member of the tribe!"

This indefinite suggestion was almost equal to an offer of adoption. As such, it was a signal honor. Shane flushed with pleasure.

"Two Eagles is kind as well as wise," he answered. "It is good to be friends with the Blackfeet. But Running Feather remembers that White-Son-of-a-Knife has a mother. It is Two Eagles' word that I may go. It is my word that I go to find my mother as quickly as I can."

THE "DESTROYING ANGELS" 59

"Good," answered the younger chief. "Before another moon you shall go. There is much snow on the peaks, still."

"I will finish the wheel travois before I leave," declared Shane. "Then the Piegan will have a cart that rolls; such is not to be found in any tribe of the Blackfeet."

As Shane's Indian name suggested, he had shown himself clever with tools, though the camp possessed only the few rude tools which the Blackfeet had secured from the Hudson's Bay trading post in exchange for furs. Naturally, Shane could not approach the deftness shown by the Indians in the handling or repairing of their own devices, but, understanding white men's goods better, and having watched the blacksmith at the Hudson Bay post at work, he was able to repair articles secured in trade and which had been broken. During the six months of the winter, Shane had restored to usefulness many objects which had been cast aside.

One day, early in the winter, while talking to Running Feather, Shane had criticized the Piegan crude system of moving camp. Tent poles, hides for bedding, household utensils, and all the belongings of the tribe—such as were

not carried on the backs of the women—were fastened on a travois. This consisted of two poles, the smaller ends of which were tied to a pony's sides, while the heavier ends dragged on the ground.

Shane had suggested that he would design a rough cart. True, there was no iron for wheel-tires, and the making and inserting of spokes and felloes would be difficult. But Shane had seen solid wheels used in home-made bullock-carts in Canada. These wheels were made in wedge-shaped segments, the segments being fastened together by wooden pins, driven diagonally into holes in both segments, the holes being bored out by burning.

The boy had shown the Blackfeet how to make such wheels. From tough pieces of root he had made hubs, the holes through which had also been bored out by a heated piece of scrap-iron, found among the débris of trade goods. He had made strong axles to fit into these hubs, retaining them in place with lynch-pins of ash, and had showed the Indians how to lubricate with grease.

Difficult as was the work itself, it was made all the harder by the fact that the heavy timber



Photograph by Julia E. Luell.

PIEGAN INDIANS ON THE TRAIL.

Photograph of unusual value, probably the last ever to be taken of this tribe when actually moving to a new camp site, using the old travois.

was some distance away from the Piegan camp, and that the tools for handling big timbers were few. Fortunately, the great treasure of the camp was a woodman's axe, and, with this, most of the work was done.

The cart was made possible by the fact that—in a recent raid—the Blackfeet had captured some yoke-bullocks, which, by the judgment of Two Eagles, had not been slaughtered for meat. These bullocks could be hitched to the cart. Thus the ponies would be relieved from the burden of moving camp, and the ever-present danger of a surprise attack by enemies at that time could be averted.

The completion of this uncouth cart—of which, despite its crudeness, the Piegan were very proud—occupied Shane until almost the very day of his departure. Its success made the boy a benefactor to the tribe, and he received the formal thanks of the Council.

More important still, the work facilitated the redemption of Two Eagles' promise, for, though the head chief of the tribe exercised authority because of his age, among the Blackfeet,—as among most Indian tribes—the seat of authority lay in the Council, and there were

some of the younger chiefs who resented the freeing of a paleface. The cart, however, made Shane a friend of all parties.

Accordingly, although the pony on which Shane had ridden toward the buffalo on the fateful day when he was captured by the Indians, was, by right of capture, the property of the tribe, this pony was returned to him, together with his saddle. A second pony, the gift of the tribe, also was tendered him.

On his feet the boy wore a pair of handsomely embroidered moccasins, given him by Running Feather's favorite wife. He had donned a brand-new buckskin shirt, fastened with an elk-hide belt embroidered with brightly stained quills. A raw-hide quiver, filled with arrows, hung on his back, and a powerful war-bow, backed with sinews, was slung over his shoulders. His gun, also, was returned to him, but all the ammunition had been shot away.

With bow-and-arrow, however, Shane could make his way and kill enough game for food, since, during the winter, he had practiced archery with the lads of the tribe. He was far from being their equal, for the Blackfeet boys had been exercised in the art since infancy, but

Shane had learned to shoot straight and far, none the less.

The night before he left the Piegan camp, Shane had been admitted to a Council meeting, and had smoked a farewell pipe of peace with Two Eagles and the chiefs. He was thus, formally, an ally of the Blackfeet, and could count on any member of the tribe as a friend. He could depend upon the faithfulness of his Piegan guide, therefore, as though the Indian were his brother.

Of that spring journey among the Snow Mountains, through the passes to the ridge of the Continental Divide, of the bivouacs, of a snow-slide which they escaped by a hair's-breadth, of the danger when once sighted by an outlying Crow scout, of their hunts, of a bear which he and his guide shot and in which it was Shane's arrow which gave the final coup, there would be much to tell. Suffice it to say that in a little less than two months' ride, Shane's guide led him over the crest of the Rockies through a narrow and tempest-filled gorge now known as Lemhi Pass.

Upon the farther side of the pass, they encountered the Tukuariki Indians, or Sheep-

Eaters, so called from the fact that they were marvellous hunters of the Rocky Mountain Sheep, a big-horned, wild, and dangerous breed. The Tukuariki received them with outward hospitality, for the name of the Blackfeet carried respect and fear. Shane's guide, however, was suspicious, and, instead of sleeping in the Tukuariki camp, they took turns in watching.

Early next morning, before the camp was fully aroused, they struck southward over terribly rough ground, making for the grassy slopes leading down from Bannock Pass. It was for this latter pass that the two had been heading when the presence of the Crow scout had caused them to take the more northern route.

Below Bannock Pass, which they reached without any evidence of hostility from the Tukuariki—though they were trailed by Sheep-Eater scouts the entire distance—a well-defined trail led to the Mud Sinks, in the center of the arid Snake River Plains, at that time one of the regular camping sites of the Sho-sho-ko. There Shane bade good-bye to his Blackfeet guide, and anew found himself alone in an Indian camp.

The Sho-sho-ko were a very different type

from the Blackfeet. The Sho-sho-ko belonged to the Shoshonean Family, while the Siksika or Blackfeet (not to be confused with the Blackfoot Sioux) belonged to the Algonkian Family. The word "Sho-sho-ko," strictly, is not the name of a tribe, but rather was given to those Indians of the Shoshoni who lived in the arid and inhospitable country along the Snake River. The word "Sho-sho-ko," meaning "walkers," is of comparatively recent derivation, dating since the time when the Plains Indians first possessed horses.

With the gradual extinction of the buffalo, the possession or the non-possession of horses made an enormous difference in the culture-stage of a tribe. Buffalo were not only meat, but their hides also formed bedding and shelter. Moreover, buffalo were scarce on the Snake River Plain, which is cut off from the prairie country on every side by precipitous mountain ranges. Lacking buffalo skins, the Sho-sho-ko could not make tepees and could not dry stores of meat for the winter. Rabbits and prairie dogs formed the staple of their diet, and they ate, also, roots, nuts and seeds.

The Sho-sho-ko camp in which Shane found

himself, was midway between the high-culture and low-culture Shoshoni. The head chief and two of the other chiefs had tepees, but old and in poor condition. The rest of the tribe lived in brush shelters, a poor protection against the wintry cold. These, at the Mud Sinks, were roofed in, however, an advance upon the still poorer Sho-sho-ko of the western gorges of the Snake River, who lived behind semicircular brushwood walls, open to the sky, and unavailing against snow and rain.

The gift of a spare horse-blanket, which Shane had kept under his saddle, won the immediate friendship of Round Horn, the Shoshoni chief, and he readily provided Shane with a guide, the more so since Shane suggested that the Shoshoni could ride his spare pony. The boy found it difficult to make himself understood, for he was not proficient in sign language, and, of course, did not know a word of the Shoshoni tongue. Nor, for that matter, were these Indians adepts in sign-talk.

The trail was not difficult, at first. It led over the arid plains, past Antelope Butte, to the deep gorge of the Snake River and along the edge of the chasm until the junction with Raft River was

reached. At that point, the descent into the gorge, though perilous for the ponies, was possible. They reached the bottom without accident.

The Snake River, still swollen with the melting snows from the higher peaks of the Divide, was a formidable obstacle. The Shoshoni guide, however, pointed to a place where a back swirl of water, caused by the incoming of the tributary stream, enabled a hazardous fording-place. At first the Shoshoni refused to attempt the crossing, but menacing gestures from Shane—who had no intention of being left without a guide—caused the cowardly nature of the Shoshoko to submit. Shane would not have dared to threaten a Blackfeet brave, but the "Walkers" were not fighters.

Once forced into the crossing, the Shoshoni showed himself both powerful and skilful. It was touch-and-go for several minutes, and even Shane doubted whether they would cross. Twice he felt sure that he and his pony were gone, but, with terrible and exhausting effort, he won through to the shallower water on the opposite bank, and got to safety. Then, and not till then, did Shane give in. Weak and trem-

bling, he lay on the ground to recover. After all, he was but a boy, and had not come to his full strength, yet.

Thence the trail southward was easy. It followed the shore of the Raft River, running in a valley of the Black Pine Mountains. As the river narrowed to a creek, the climb grew steeper, and still more steep, until at last Shane and his Shoshoni guide stood on the crest of the Black Pine and Hansel Mountains. To the north he could see a faint line which marked the gorge of the Snake River, and, to the south, far away, shining in the sun, he could see the gleam of water.

The guide pointed to this gleam, and Shane knew that he was gazing on Great Salt Lake.

They descended the slope for a couple of miles, to where a small stream, fed by several springs, filtered its way down from the mountains. The Shoshoni pointed to the stream, made the sign of a trail, and waved his hand to the south.

Shane understood. This little stream was to be his guide. Obviously, he thought, it must flow into the Lake. What would happen when he arrived there, he did not know. He knew



SNAKE RIVER CANYON.

Where Shane swam the Snake River after threatening the Ute guide who tried to desert him.

nothing of the country, nothing of the people.

Turning to his guide, Shane gave him a steel fish-hook, almost the last of the articles he possessed which could be of value to an Indian, raised his hand in peace farewell to the Shoshoni and set his ponies' heads down the little stream, now known as Dove Creek.

He camped, that night, on the bank of the creek, absolutely alone for the first time since he had left the Hudson Bay Post almost a year before. In age he was still a boy, but the intervening twelve months, spent with "Coon-tail" on the trail, with the Blackfeet in their winter camp, with his Blackfeet guide crossing the Rockies, and with the Shoshoni guide, had taught him self-reliance. In truth, he had but two desires—ammunition for his rifle, and the opportunity to rejoin his mother.

By sunrise the next morning, Shane was on his way, and, that evening, he camped by the side of Great Salt Lake.

Following his first instinct he jumped into the Lake for a swim. He came out again, in a hurry. He could not sink in the dense water, and the sensation was strange and creepy. As he dried, the water left a crust of salt on his

skin. The water was not drinkable. No plants grew near the shores of the lake. There was no game.

It was a "hungry camp" that Shane made that night. Dove Creek, which had been his guide almost to the shores of the lake, had petered out and sunk into the ground before actually reaching the lake.

Shane lay awake most of the night, considering his plans. Since "Coon-tail" had fought his way through the Crow country, which was due south of the Blackfeet hunting-grounds, he must be, now, far to the east, since Shane had traveled for more than a month to the westward. The boy's route, then, must be eastward, but he must keep the lake in view lest he find himself in the Crow country.

At the same time, Shane realized that it was impossible for him actually to follow the shores of the lake. Such scanty herbage as grew, here and there, was harsh and not to his ponies' taste. Game was scarce. Of drinking-water, there was none.

Without a doubt, he must strike northeastward, toward the mountains at his back. On the slopes he would always find running water.

Where there was running water there would be grass for his ponies, and also undergrowth in which rabbits might be found. True, he had no ammunition for his rifle, but he had his bow-and-arrows. Moreover, in the dozen or more camps he had made with his Sho-sho-ko guide he had learned much about the edible roots, nuts and seeds, which may be found in that country, if one only knows which of them are good to eat and how they must be prepared.

Turning his back to Great Salt Lake, Shane struck northward and then eastward. His way lay over the lower slopes of the Spring Hills—where he found good water, good feed, and an abundance of game. Next day he crossed Cherry Creek. On the fourth day he came to Bear River, one of the few streams which feeds Great Salt Lake, and on which the city of Brigham is now built. Crossing it, the slopes of Uinta Hills turned him southward, bringing him close to the hot springs which feed the eastern arm of the Lake. Thence in the rolling Uinta country, rich in meadow grass, he struck eastward happily, sure, soon, of rejoining "Coon-tail" and the party where he would find his mother.

He camped the seventh night after leaving his Shoshoni guide, in a little copse, from which he could see the lake shimmering in the sunset. Squatting by his camp-fire, over which he was toasting some freshly-caught trout, taken from a near-by creek, he heard voices.

Shane rose to his feet to greet the strangers. As they came nearer he could distinguish that the tones were in English.

A big man, heavily bearded, rode into the circle of the firelight. He cast one shrewd look at the boy but said nothing, waiting for the camper to speak.

“Howdy!” said Shane, hospitably. “Had supper?”

The stranger cast a look, half-stern, half-humorous, at the lad’s little string of fish.

“There’s forty of us,” he said.

“Oh!” said Shane. “I’m afraid I haven’t enough.”

“Besides,” said the stranger, “we don’t eat with Gentiles.”

“You’re Mormons, then!” commented Shane. He had feared this encounter, but now that he was face to face with it, the situation did not seem so terrible. It was so long since he had

THE "DESTROYING ANGELS" 73

heard a word of English that it seemed impossible to believe that those who spoke his language could be his enemies.

"Yes," said the Mormon leader. "We're Children of Dan."

The words conveyed no special meaning to Shane. He knew nothing of the Danites, that terrible band of Mormon fighters, whose special duty it was to defend the outskirts of the Mormon settlements and repel intruders. Many gory tales are told of the Danites, but the equally gory tales of those who attacked the Mormons are not always told.

"I've heard of Mormons," continued the boy, seeing that some answer was expected, "but I've never seen any before."

"It might have been better for you if you didn't see us now," was the grim reply. "Come, now, tell what you're doing here, and be quick about it. Where's the rest of your party?"

"I'm the whole party," answered Shane, his heart beating fast at the menacing tones of the Mormon leader. "A Shoshoni guide took me over the Snake River and near to Salt Lake. I've struck eastward from there to get back to

my folks, who are somewhere south of the Crow country.”

“You’re alone?” asked the stranger, incredulously.

“Sure, alone,” replied the boy. “I haven’t seen a white man for eight months.”

“If your folks are east of here, how did you get among the Shoshones?”

“It’s quite a long story,” answered Shane, but finding that the Mormon leader wanted all the details, he told the story of his life at the Hudson Bay post, of the journey of “Coontail,” of his capture by the Blackfeet, of his winter in the Piegan camp, and of his journey over the Rockies and through the Shoshone country.

The Danite listened, interrupting with frequent questions, evidently designed to find out if the boy was really telling the truth. Presently he raised his voice and called another of the band.

“Ebenezer,” he said, “look at this lad’s moccasins.”

A second man, slight, bronzed, keen-eyed, stepped forward and examined the moccasins intently.

THE "DESTROYING ANGELS" 75

"Well," questioned the leader sharply, "can you tell of what tribe?"

"Blackfeet," the second man answered promptly, "Piegan Blackfeet, I should say."

The leader nodded, and the Mormon scout drew back into the shadows.

"That seems to bear out your story," commented the Danite leader, in a less suspicious tone. "Could you draw a map of your trail?"

"I never tried to draw a map," answered Shane, "but I can remember it, pretty well. I think, if you showed me how, I could make shift to give a general idea of it."

"Good," replied the leader, evidently more satisfied with the truth of the lad's story. "Even a rough map might be useful to the brethren. We have not explored far to the northward. Now, you'd better finish your supper. I'll wait for you. Then you will come to our camp. In the morning I will decide what is to be done with you."

"I want to go east," responded Shane.

"Just at present," retorted Lot Smith—for it was no less a man—"it makes very little difference what you want. You will have to do what we want."

"I'm a prisoner, then?"

"Yes!"

The terse monosyllable was as decisive as any oath-borne statement could have been. Shane saw that protest and pleading would alike be useless.

Yet the Danite leader, while stern, did not show himself unkindly. He chatted with Shane over his adventures and waited patiently until the lad had finished supper.

When the last trout was eaten, the Mormon arose. Shane repacked his slender equipment without a word, and, in obedience to a nod, followed the Danite chief to where his band stood waiting. Even by the light of a young moon the boy could see that the party was powerful, well-mounted and fully armed.

On the way to the camp, suddenly a phrase flashed across Shane's memory.

"Say," he said, turning to the leader, who was riding beside him, "you're not what they call 'Destroying Angels,' are you?"

The Danite leader answered gruffly,

"That's what they call us; Yes!"

Shane said no more. The name was sinister enough.

CHAPTER IV

MORMONS AND MASSACRE

“SHANE, do you want to become a Mormon?”

Such were the first words shot at the boy when he was summoned to the Danite leader's presence the next morning.

Shane was dumfounded. He had never thought of such a contingency, and he did not know what the question implied. If he agreed, he pledged himself to the unknown; if he refused, he might be signing his death-warrant.

“I—I don't know,” he stammered, “I don't understand anything about it.”

“If it was a case of ‘Turn Mormon or be shot!’ what would you do?”

The issue was crucial. But Shane had learned craft while dealing with the Indians.

“I think I should say,” he answered, “that a Mormon of that kind wouldn't be worth much.”

“Much or little, would you turn?”

In this extremity, Shane remembered his ex-

perience with Two Eagles. Nothing ever was lost by frank dealing.

"If Mormonism is right, I would turn," he answered, "if it isn't, I wouldn't. As I said before, I don't know anything about it. It can't be altogether right, or people wouldn't talk about it like they do; it can't be altogether wrong, or such a lot of good folks wouldn't have become Mormons. It's a kind of religion, isn't it?"

The Danite leader nodded.

"Well," said Shane, "in any sort of religion, I suppose, there ought to be fair play. Give me a chance to find out what being a Mormon means, and I'll be able to answer."

The chief of the band rose, walked over to the boy and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"That's a straight answer," he admitted. "You're right. Folks hate us because they don't know anything about us."

His face darkened and his voice deepened.

"Suppose you were told," he said, "that because of a religious opinion, hundreds of defenceless people had been chased out from one town after another, their property stolen, and their houses burned; that thousands of the peo-

ple had been slain in cold blood; that their leader—whom they regarded as a prophet and a holy man—had been taken to a jail and there shot by a mob through the windows; that the survivors had marched a thousand miles through hostile Indian country to reach a place where they might practice their religion in peace, and that, as soon as they settled down, they found the people who had massacred their families and friends pursuing them and trying to break up their new homes—what would you do?"

"I'd chase them away," declared Shane, promptly.

"And if they came armed?"

"I'd shoot!"

Shane's reasoning was that of the Hudson's Bay post where he had been brought up. He knew little about Gospel ethics, but a good deal about the primitive justice of the frontier.

"So," commented the Danite leader, "you'd shoot, would you? Well, that's just what we do."

"But do you really mean," queried Shane, astonished, "that the Mormons were treated that way? I thought the East was so quiet and civilized!"

“You’d hardly believe me if I told you what actually has happened in New York, Missouri, and Illinois,” was the bitter reply. “But several of my men were through it. When we camp to-night, one of them shall tell you. Somewhere, you’ve evidently heard of the ‘Destroying Angels.’ Well, a good deal of what you hear about us isn’t true, but some of it is. But, while you’re with us, you ought to know why we are banded together.”

He paced to and fro for a few moments, gnawing his mustache, then turned back to the boy with an entire change of tone.

“Let that go for the present,” he said, “and let me see what you can do about that map. Here’s a sketch made by one of our scouts showing the north end of Salt Lake, and here are one or two other sketch maps, showing the country around. I haven’t any idea that they’re correct, but they’ll help you out, maybe.”

Shane lay down on the ground and spread out the maps, as directed. He racked his brain to remember the camping-places he had made, and the direction which each bore to the other. He soon found that though it was easy enough to describe in a general way where he had been,

and by what route he had traveled, it was difficult to set it down on paper. However, with the help of the Mormon scout,—who understood rough map-making—Shane managed to give the Danite leader a general idea of the region between the Musselshell River and the Lemhi Pass, and thence over the Snake River Plains. The map, as finally drawn, was far from accurate, but it was better than nothing. It would be of some service to Mormon scouting parties. Especially, it convinced Lot Smith that the boy had told the truth in every particular.

On closer acquaintance, the Danite leader shone in an entirely new light. He had a large family, so he told Shane, and one of his sons was about Shane's age. In general, he seemed more interested in the agricultural outlook of the Utah country than in his recognized—though non-official—work of guarding the Mormon frontiers, a task which he pursued with a fierce fanaticism. Shane was shrewd enough to see that such a man was a vastly better leader than one who was blood-thirsty by nature. Lot Smith's men respected him, and obeyed his orders implicitly.

That evening, when all were gathered around

the camp-fire—Shane had been given his food apart from the rest—the Danite leader called him.

“You said you wanted to hear the truth about Mormons and how they were treated!” he said. “Well, Lehi, here, will tell you.” He turned to an elderly man, sitting beside him. “Keep to the facts, Lehi,” he ordered, “and make it as short as you can.”

The old man, a hawk-nosed keen-eyed type, reminding Shane, somehow, of an eagle, took up the tale.

“I ought to know the facts,” said Lehi. “I was there. I’ve been through it. Twice my house was burned. My wife an’ three of my children were killed by a mob. My old mother was shot in her bed. My father died on the march. Just me an’ my two sons are left. They’re both here, in this band, an’ their guns ain’t a-goin’ to rust while there’s a Gentile in Utah, huntin’ trouble.

“But you won’t want to hear about me an’ mine. Elder Lot says I’m to tell you what Mormons are, an’ what the folks back in the East did to us. It’s ugly, but it’s true. I’m a-goin’ to tell you!



Courtesy of Home Protection Publishing Company.

THE DANITE.

Illustration from a reprint of the alleged confession of John Doyle Lee, chief among the Danites, who was in command of the Destroying Angels at the Mountain Meadow Massacre. Lee escaped arrest for twenty years after the crime, but was finally captured, imprisoned and executed. His confession was published, but all copies save two were secured by the Mormon authorities and suppressed. The reprint is declared to be authentic but the Mormons deny its authenticity.

MORMONS AND MASSACRE 83

“Mormons are Christians. They believe in the Bible an’ in the Book of Mormon as well. An’ where did we get the Book of Mormon? An’ how do we know it’s true? I’m a-goin’ to tell you!

“An angel, called Moroni, appeared to Joseph Smith, then a young fellow livin’ in New York State. The angel said that if Joseph Smith would go to a hill not far from his farm, he’d find some gold plates hidden up. He went there, an’ found them. Folks who don’t believe in Mormonism say there never were any such plates, but plenty of people saw them, an’, afterwards, swore to havin’ seen them. That ain’t never been denied. The translation of the plates, which were written on in an old language, is the Book of Mormon.

“What like is this Book of Mormon, you ask? I’m a-goin’ to tell you!

“It’s an addition to the Bible. You see, the Bible tells about the people who stayed in Asia after the nations were scattered at the buildin’ of the Tower of Babel. The Book of Mormon tells about the people who came to America after that scatterin’. It tells their whole history, right down to the time when some of them dis-

obeyed the Lord an' were punished by bein' given dark skins. We call them Indians, now, an' they're our enemies, still.

"You've heard of the Star of Bethlehem, haven't you?"

"Yes," agreed Shane.

"Well, the Book of Mormon tells that the Star appeared in America, too. What's more, at the time of the Crucifixion there was an earthquake here, same as there was in Palestine. An' what's more yet, Christ appeared to his disciples here, after the Resurrection, same as He did to his disciples in Asia, so the Book of Mormon says.

"But, in spite of that, the people here turned wicked, an', in punishment, were destroyed by the Indians. After the last battle, the records, written on plates of gold, were hidden in the hill where the angel told Joseph Smith to find them. Mormons believe that this revelation, by the angel, shows that the Second Advent ain't far off, and that the New Jerusalem will be built in America; maybe, right around these parts.

"Does that seem strange to you, Boy?"

"No stranger than other things I've heard," answered Shane. "It's all new, though."

MORMONS AND MASSACRE 85

“Of course it’s new. So was the Bible new, once. Well, that’s what the Book of Mormon is about. We believe it, but we don’t force any one else to. All we ask is to be let alone. If this is a country of religious liberty, we Mormons ought to have liberty, same as all the rest, hadn’t we?”

“Looks like it,” agreed Shane.

“Yo’ll find out how much liberty there was in those days, an’ how much there is now.¹ I’m a-goin’ to tell you!

“The angel Moroni first appeared to Joseph Smith in 1823, an’, four years later, Smith was told to take the records. His neighbors robbed the house three times, tryin’ to get the plates to melt them down for gold, but the records were well hidden. Then Joseph Smith took to carryin’ them with him everywhere he went. Twice he was mobbed an’ three times he was shot at, but each time he escaped. So he moved to Pennsylvania, where the first part of the plates was translated. The end he was ordered to leave

¹ It is to be remembered that the speaker is represented as telling the story in the year 1857. The whole situation has changed utterly since then, two States of the Union are preponderantly Mormon, and there are several Mormon members of Congress.

alone. The plates o' gold were hid in the ground again. When it's time for another revelation, they will be found. Leastwise, that's what we believe.

"The first Mormons were baptized in our faith in 1829. The first church was started in 1830. Mormonism grew fast. Persecution began at once. In three or four years, the hate of the folks around had grown so high that to be known as a Mormon meant robbery, mobbin', an', as often as not, death. More than a score were murdered in 1835, more than fifty in 1836, more than a hundred in 1837. Most of us, then, moved away from New York State, an' struck west to Missouri, hopin' that maybe we'd find liberty an' freedom.

"There, things were worse than before. In 1838, Governor Boggs of Missouri issued an official order 'to exterminate the Mormons'¹ although the Governor of Iowa had declared us to be: 'inoffensive, industrious, and worthy citizens,' and though President Van Buren of the United States had declared to Joseph Smith: 'your cause is just.'

"What happened when Governor Boggs gave

¹ This barbarous and un-American order is a historic fact.

this inhuman order to exterminate us? I'm a-goin' to tell you!

"A small army of militia an' private citizens surrounded the little town of Far West, Mo., where a lot of us had settled. I was there. We got ready to defend ourselves. But the leaders of the mob came forward an' promised protection if we would agree to a parley. We did. Then, though they had given their word, they laughed in our faces, an' sayin', 'any lie was good enough for a Mormon,' arrested us an' imprisoned us. I was thrown into jail with the rest.

"Next day they fixed up a make-believe sort of court. We weren't allowed to speak in our defense. That mock court found us guilty an' condemned us to death—not for any crime, you understand, just for believin' in the Book of Mormon. We would have been killed right then an' there hadn't two army officers stepped forward an' declared that the proceedin's were unlawful, an' that such an execution would be plain murder. They had to let us go.

"With the Missouri officials so set against us, we moved out of the State an' struck out again, to Illinois. There we settled at Nauvoo. Gov-

ernor Boggs, still blood-hungry,¹ asked that Joseph Smith be extradited from Illinois to Missouri. Smith gave himself up, was tried in Illinois, an' acquitted.

"By 1844, there were over 20,000 of us at Nauvoo, an' we built a big temple there. The folk in Illinois, excited by what had happened in Missouri an' New York, got scared as soon as they saw how fast we grew. The charter of the town of Nauvoo made us mighty near an independent colony, an' they didn't like that, either. They started persecutions wherever they could, but there were so many of us at Nauvoo that they didn't dare to go too far, at first.

"Then a new governor was elected an' he agreed to the arrest of Joseph Smith. The prophet, together with his brother Hyrum Smith, was taken an' thrown into jail in Carthage, Ill. He was never given even a hearin'. That night, a mob of 200 men surrounded the jail an' fired volley after volley through the win-

¹ It is to be remembered that there is another side to this story. The Mormons, frankly and openly, declared themselves disregarding of the laws of the United States, and were in open rebellion against the State authorities. Boggs' attitude is inexcusable, but he believed Mormonism to be a menace to the peace of the State.

dows on the defenseless an' imprisoned men. Both were killed."

"But that was rank murder!" cried Shane, indignantly.

"That's just what happened. What's more, as soon as the news reached the settlements near Nauvoo that Smith was dead, a big mob of several thousand men, backed up by the militia, started for us, shootin' men, women an' children, right an' left. We fought back, an' the whole State got up in arms against us. Brigham Young, who took Smith's place as leader, promised the folk of Illinois that we'd get out of the State 'as soon as water would run an' grass would grow.'

"In February, 1848, nine years ago, some thousands of us started on the long trail. We headed west, not knowin' where we were goin', but tryin' to get out of the jurisdiction of the United States.

"At that, we didn't succeed in doin' it, for the treaty which ended the Mexican war put all this territory under the American rule. We marched those thousand miles, with nothin' but the hatred of the whites behind us an' the hatred of the Indians ahead of us. Every day of the

march some one died. Our trail was lined with graves.

"An', while we were marchin', there came word that, as soon as we were gone, another massacre had happened. We'd left behind the old, the sick an' the feeble, mothers with young babies, an' the like, for them to follow us when the weather got warmer. That was easy pickin' for the Illinois folk. A mob, again helped by the militia, attacked Nauvoo, an' after a six-day fight, half of our folks were killed."

"But that's horrible!" cried Shane, aghast.

"It's every word true," asserted the old man. "An', in return, see what we've done. Out of a country which, nine years ago, was nothin' but desert or Indian huntin' ground, we've established a city, started farms an' settlements, built schools an' churches, made irrigation works an' created a flourishin' state where ten years ago there wasn't nothin' but Indians an' jack-rabbits. Isn't that doin' somethin' for the United States?"

"It surely is," the boy agreed.

"An' what does the United States do in return? I'm a-goin' to tell you!

"They send an army after us. Right now,

troops under General Johnston are marchin' out here to start some more massacres, only, this time, instead of bein' started by half-drunken an' bigoted mobs, they're organized by cavalry an' infantry wearin' the uniform of our own country.

"An' what's the army sent for? I'm a-goin' to tell you that, too!

"It's sent to try an' force us to let non-Mormon settlers come here, to force us to welcome murderers, to give them a chance to start a new campaign of lies and slaughter.¹ Shall we submit? Shall we stretch out the right hand of fellowship to those whose hands are drippin' with the blood of our women an' children?"

The old man's voice trembled with anger. He shook with passion and his wrath was fearful to see.

"I, for one," he thundered, "will not! There's a bullet in my pouch for every soldier

¹ As a matter of historical fact, the army was sent because the Mormons had refused to accept non-Mormon Federal judges, because they had attacked non-Mormon settlers, because they were stirring up the Indians in hostility to the whites, because in the "State of Deseret" (afterwards Utah) customs were in use which were a flagrant violation of the laws of the United States, and because the Mormon authorities were in open defiance against the government.

who comes to kill his countrymen without a cause, an' another for every Gentile who sneaks in to rob us of the country we have carved out of the wilderness. There's vengeance—Vengeance!—on those who slay the children of the Lord, an' I'm one of the agents of that vengeance!"

A hum of approval rang round the circle, and all eyes were turned on Shane. More than one hand sought the butt of a revolver.

The Danite leader, keenly alive to the feeling among his men, turned to Shane grimly.

"You have heard, Boy," he declared. "What have you to say?"

Shane did not hesitate. He spoke with entire frankness.

"If I'd been through all that," he responded, "I'd shoot, as I said before. There's no dodging that vengeance ought to come in somewhere. But these things didn't happen to me or mine, and I don't see that I've any call to be an agent of vengeance. If I was a Mormon, now, it would be different."

The Danite leader was about to speak, but the old man interposed.

“The boy is right,” he said. “Vengeance demands a willin’ hand as well as a heavy one. I hate all Gentiles. I hate them! I hate them! They poison the air I breathe. But vengeance has got to be just as well as terrible. This boy has come into the country by no wish of his own, an’ he’s ready to leave it. If he goes, I’ve nothin’ against him, if he stays—”

The eye of the Mormon leader lightened. Though inflexible in his severity, and though he would have ordered Shane’s death without a qualm, he was just. He had feared that Lehi’s story would so inflame the band that his hand would be forced. The boy, in truth, had escaped but narrowly.

“Turn in, lad,” said Lot Smith to him, not unkindly. “You’ve heard enough to give you something to think over. And don’t lose any time in getting into your blankets, either! We’ve got things to discuss that you’ll be better off not to hear.”

Shane rose obediently, and the leader motioned to one of the younger men.

“Watch over the boy while we talk,” he said. “Don’t stir from his side, whether he sleeps

or not. We want no spying and no over-sharp ears."

The younger Danite nodded, and Shane went to sleep with a watchful figure standing beside him, leaning on a rifle.

CHAPTER V

SMOKE ON THE PRAIRIE

FOR some weeks Shane rode with the "Destroying Angels." More than once, from indirect references, he gleaned the information that small parties of settlers had been visited with "vengeance," in many and many a case, through no fault of their own.

Both Lot Smith and Lehi talked with him many times. They were honest men, both, and did not shirk the truth. As the boy came to know the Mormons better, he found more and more reason for deploring the fanaticism which people in the East had shown against the new religion. At the same time, he found himself less and less in sympathy with the Danites. Even to his frontiersman type of ideas, injustice did not seem a fair answer to injustice.

What interested the boy more than the religious question was Lot Smith's vision of the State of Deseret or Utah as a fruitful land.

The Danite leader was never tired of depicting the West in its change from Indian hunting-country to peaceful farm settlements.

"These are wild times," he admitted to Shane, one day, "and the wild times will last for a little while yet. But the Indians must go, Shane, and the white man must come; the buffalo must go, and the dairy cattle must come; the sword must be beaten into the plowshare, and the desert must blossom as a rose.

"Look you, Boy," he went on. "Already, though you are so young, you have seen the change coming. The wild Indians who would do nothing but murder the whites are giving place to the Indians who trade with the whites for their furs. That is the first step. Each fur trading post is an outpost of civilization. Where the fur-traders rule, the Indians no longer rule."

"It is true," Shane admitted. "Running Feather, in the Blackfeet camp, used to tell me how different were the younger chiefs from their elders. He used to tell me how bitterly Two Eagles and the old chiefs felt that the days of Indian freedom were past."

"So are the days of the fur-trader," declared

the Danite. "We Mormons were the first to cross the prairies, and, as long as we can, we'll keep our land free from Gentiles. But"—and he shook his head—"it can't be for long. More and more will come every year and the West will be settled like the East."

"Then you'll go still farther west, again, I suppose," hazarded Shane.

The Mormon leader shook his head.

"Some of us have gone to California," he replied, "but they have returned. No, we shall have to make ourselves as strong as we can in this State we have created in the heart of the continent, so strong that none will dare to interfere with us."

One morning, some ten days after this talk, when Shane woke up in the morning, he found the Danite band reduced to half its strength. Some twenty or more of the "Destroying Angels" had ridden off in the early morning, but so quietly that Shane had not even been awakened by their departure.

The boy made no comment, judging that this diminution of numbers might betoken a raid of which he was not supposed to have any knowledge. He had been careful never to show

the slightest curiosity about the actual work of the band.

That morning, however, before they had been on the trail an hour, Shane suddenly reined up his pony sharply:

"Prairie fire!" he called, and pointed to the horizon.

The Danite leader cast a quick glance in the direction and smiled grimly.

"That is not a prairie fire," he answered, "those are wagons burning."

"Wagons!" exclaimed Shane, surprised, for he knew the value of wagons on the plains and to destroy them seemed an astounding waste of material.

"Wagons," repeated Lot Smith. "Supply wagons sent to feed an American army on its march to kill Americans."

For a moment Shane was silent, then a question which had been burning in him for several weeks, burst out:

"I don't understand a bit," he said, "and I do wish you'd explain. Lehi didn't ever tell me just why an army is sent out after you all. I don't want to seem as if I didn't believe him, but there must be something more than he said.



Copyright by Carrie Adell Stratton.

THE FATE OF MANY A "GENTILE" IMMIGRANT.

Wagon trains passing through Mormon territory in early days were in peril of encounter by "Agents of Vengeance." Such massacres were in requital of massacres of Mormons in New York, Illinois and Missouri.

Surely there's some excuse for this army besides a religious fuss."

"There is," answered the Mormon leader, with frankness. "They accuse us of polygamy, which is against the laws of the United States."

At that word, Shane remembered that this was the very attack he had heard made in Canada against the Mormons, and had never been able to remember. Then, remembering that the Danite leader had always spoken openly, he asked, suddenly,

"Is it true?"

Lot Smith looked straight at the boy.

"Yes," he answered bluntly, "it is.¹ What then?"

Whereupon he entered upon a long and rambling talk full of comparisons between the marriage customs of Old Testament times and those of the Mormons of that period, most of which Shane did not understand. Dimly, as an uninstructed boy might, he felt there was something graver in this aspect of Mormonism than there seemed. It seemed to put up a barrier

¹ Polygamy was not announced as permitted and encouraged by Mormonism until after Joseph Smith's death. It is no longer officially upheld.

between him and Mormonism, somehow, though he could not have explained why.

Once on this subject, the Danite leader did not seem able to stop, and he rambled on, until a second blur of smoke on the horizon changed the current of his thoughts. He pointed it out to Shane.

“Another supply train?” the boy queried.

The Mormon leader nodded.

“That army is apt to be hungry,” was Shane’s comment. “How many are on the march, Elder?”

“Several thousand,” the Danite answered briefly. “Too many for us to meet in open battle. But famine is a good ally.”

Shane realized that these guerilla tactics on the part of the Mormons might easily render General Johnston’s campaign one of great difficulty. Riding right into the Mormon country, there would be little game, he would not be able to secure any food from the settlers, and a large party without food is in desperate straits.

That day, Lot Smith called the noon halt a full hour and more before the sun was at the zenith. Dinner was of the briefest, and it was evi-

dent to Shane that Lot Smith, Lehi and others of the more responsible men of the band were anxious and constrained. The younger men, on the other hand, were unusually eager.

Two scouts rode up, hurriedly, and the Danite leader went aside to talk to them. Few words sufficed. He whirled on his heel.

“Saddle up, men,” he said, “and sharp!”

He wheeled upon Shane.

“Understand,” he said, sternly, “that you’re still a prisoner. Any attempt to escape will be followed by a bullet through your head. Another thing! Anything you see, you’ve got to forget.”

Shane’s glance did not quail. He looked straight at his captor.

“To begin with, Elder,” he said, “I’m not such a fool as to try to escape. And, to go on, you’ve been square with me, and I wouldn’t try. I’ll give you my word that I won’t try to escape, whatever happens.”

The leader nodded in a satisfied manner, and in a few moments, all were in the saddle. Shane noticed that—despite his promise—two of the younger Danites, mounted on good horses, rode close at his side.

The band divided into two parts, the smaller, dropping to a walk, bearing slightly to the left, the main band, Shane among them, riding off to the right.

Silence was ordered.

Keeping close to the shelter of a thicket of willows, the band circled a knoll and crossed a small stream, which Shane afterwards learned was Halm's Fork, a tributary of the Green River.

At a walk, now, that as little noise should be made as possible, the band rounded a small ridge, near the crest of which they paused, to give the ponies a moment's breathing space.

All eyes were fixed on the leader.

Suddenly, he drew his six-shooter, and with a commanding gesture, brandished it high in the air.

Every man put his spurs to his horse.

The band broke into a gallop and thundered over the ridge, Lot Smith in advance.

As Shane topped the ridge, he found himself in the midst of a wagon encampment, and, at the same instant, he heard the Danite's voice,

"Throw up your hands, Simpson!"

The wagon-master, a lean frontiersman, only

too ready to fight, was about to reach for his gun, but the Danite had been too quick for him. Seeing that the Mormon had the drop on him, up went his hands.

A quick glance had shown the wagon-master that he could look for no help from his comrades, for they also were cornered. Down the slope of the ridge to the creek, he saw a second band of Danites in the act of surrounding the teamsters, and the bullocks who had been taken down for watering during the noon halt.

As if this were not enough, before five minutes had passed, another armed force of Mormons appeared, and, a little later, a fourth. These evidently were the Danite bands which had fired the two wagon supply trains, the smoke of which Shane had seen that morning. The concentration had been cleverly planned and executed with military precision.

Simpson, his hands above his head, shrugged his shoulders. Like all men who have actually known danger, he knew when he was beaten. There were less than forty men attached to the wagon train, there were nearly two hundred of the Danites. He submitted to being disarmed without a word.

Lot Smith lost no time in argument. His plans were fully made.

"Look here, Simpson," he said, "we're going to be good to you. You can have one wagon, with the cattle to draw it. Get into that wagon all the blankets and provisions it'll carry, and turn right round and go back to the Missouri River. You're headed in the wrong direction."

"Can we have our guns?" asked Simpson.

"Not a gun."

"Six-shooters?"

"Not a six-shooter. Nothing but food and blankets."

"An' if we meet Injuns on the way back?"

"That's your business. We're doing you a favor to spare your lives."

"But we're not doin' the fightin' against you," protested Simpson. "We're just paid to haul the stuff."

"That's just why I don't shoot you in your tracks," was the grim reply. "It's no use talking; you ought to know that."

Surrounded, disarmed and facing odds of five to one, there was nothing for the wagon-master to do but submit. He turned to one of

the assistant wagon-masters and ordered him to pick out the strongest wagon and the sturdiest six yokes of bullocks. The wagon was loaded down to its limit.

While this was being done, Lot Smith turned to Shane.

"These men," he said abruptly, "are going east. I'll give you the chance to go with them. You'll be safer than if I let you try to go alone. But you'll have to walk, if you go."

"My ponies?" queried Shane.

"You can have them when you come to Salt Lake and tell me you want to be a Mormon," replied the Danite. "I don't grudge you the ponies, lad, but I can't afford to let any one in Simpson's party have a horse to ride and tell General Johnston our whereabouts. You understand?"

"Yes, I can see that," answered Shane, gloomily. "But, Elder Smith, one of those ponies doesn't belong to me. It's 'Coon-tail's,' like I told you."

"He'll have to stand the loss."

"And my gun?"

"Since you haven't any ammunition, you can keep it. Simpson seems to be nervous about

Indians. You can defend the party with your bow-and-arrow," he concluded, with sardonic humor. "Anyhow, it's for you to choose. Will you go on foot with this party to the Eastern settlements, where you said you wanted to go, or will you come back with me and turn Mormon? Which is it to be?"

Shane looked troubled, but his decision was made.

"You've been mighty square with me, Elder Smith," he answered, "and I wouldn't know just what to say, but for one thing. And that is, that I think I ought to get back to my mother, if I can. She'll be worrying."

"Suit yourself," said the Danite leader.

He turned to the wagon-master.

"Simpson," he ordered, "you'll take this lad along. He's been stranded with the Indians and wants to get back to his mother who's in the east, somewhere. He won't join us."

"It's one more mouth to feed," commented the wagon-master sourly, "an' he isn't much more'n a kid. But I can't leave him in your hands, that's sure! I reckon he'll have to come along."

"He's as well able to take care of himself as

a wagon-master in hostile country who doesn't put out any scouts," the Mormon answered crisply. "And as for being a kid, there's one of your party, there, who's a lot younger than he is."

The Danite pointed to a boy, who had been captured with the teamsters and who had been listening near by, looking greatly interested and not at all frightened.

"Who's that?" queried Simpson. Then, as he followed the glance, he continued,

"Oh, yes, Billy Cody. I was forgettin'. We reckon him a man, almost. They call him the 'youngest Indian fighter on the plains.'"

He called.

"Billy," he said, "here's a chum for you on that little stroll we have ahead of us."

The younger boy sauntered up and shook hands.

"Howdy!" he said. "So you've been with the Indians? Well, there'll be plenty of time for the yarn while we're hoofing the thousand miles or so back to Leavenworth."

It was thus, under the eye of the "Destroying Angels," that Shane first struck up his life-long friendship with Buffalo Bill.

CHAPTER VI

THE YOUNGEST INDIAN FIGHTER

THE trail from Green River, Utah, back to Leavenworth, Kansas, a thousand miles of rough prairie, seemed interminable to the foot-weary teamsters. Shane, having been brought up in a fur trading-post, where every one went afoot, was more hardened. Even for him, though, it was a strain, for so well had Simpson picked out the six yoke of bullocks attached to the wagon, that the return journey was made at a speed of nearly thirty miles a day.

In one particular, the returning party had good fortune. They were not molested by Indians, for whom, without guns, they would have been an easy prey. During the first few days, Shane's bow-and-arrows were of service, and he brought down several jack-rabbits, for fresh meat. On the seventh day, however, the party met a westward-bound wagon train, which spared them two rifles and ammunition.

Shane's gun, thus, also came to be of service.

Despite the fatigue, that month of march was a constant delight to Shane. First, his skill with the bow-and-arrow, and second, his unflagging good humor, won him the friendship of Simpson. In Billy Cody he found a real chum. The boy was of a character not unlike his own, save that he had seen far more of bloodshed, and was an ardent patriot. There was good reason why he should be.

Young Cody, when only ten years old, had been with his father when the latter was stabbed by one of a crowd of drunken rowdies in Salt Creek, Kansas. It was but one of the many affrays which rose out of the difficult political situation in Kansas, and which led directly to the Civil War. Shane, born and brought up in Canada, was utterly ignorant of American conditions, and Billy Cody was only too ready to explain them.

"See, Shane," he said, "just three years ago, Kansas was Indian land. In 1854, Kansas became a Territory. Now, by the terms of the Louisiana Purchase, all new territory, except Missouri, was to be kept free from slavery, or 'Free Soil.' The Missourians and the South,

generally, tried to make Kansas a 'Slave State.' So, at the first election, in 1854, the Missourians and the slave-owners sent armed forces into Kansas to intimidate the electors. The territorial legislature, thus elected, adopted the laws of Missouri, supporting slavery. The Free Soil men denied that the election was fair, and set up a government of their own. Both sides carried weapons, and fighting went on all the time.

"Only last year, Shane, an armed force from Missouri attacked the town of Lawrence, the last of a long series of outrages by the pro-slavery side. Our own men weren't much better, I'll have to admit, and John Brown and a small band of men murdered and mutilated five pro-slavery men on Pottawatomie Creek, while, in the southeast, there's a fight a day somewhere. Right now, it's mighty hard to say who's on top, but the pro-slavery men are doing it by force, and the Free Soilers by settling down like honest folk."¹

¹ Buffalo Bill is here speaking as an ardent Free Soil supporter. As a matter of historical fact, there was not much to choose between the means used by both parties at the settlement of Kansas. The territorial legislature, the United States Senate and President Buchanan were all in favor of the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution. But the Free Soil

A YOUNG INDIAN FIGHTER 111

"But your father," queried Shane, "was it because of politics that he was stabbed?"

"Just for that! It was last June. I'd gone to Fort Leavenworth with Father when he went to collect his pay for the hay and cordwood he'd sold there. Getting back to Salt Creek, where we live, we saw a crowd of drunken horsemen in front of Tiveley's trading-post. There were a lot of men in the crowd and they were all drunk, yelling, and shooting their pistols in the air. We rode quietly up to them and were going on past when one of them shouted,

" 'Thar's that abolition cuss now. Git him up here an' make him declar' hisself!'

" 'Git off that hoss, Cody!' shouted another.

"By this time more than a dozen men were crowding about Father, cursing and abusing him. Soon they tore him from his horse. One of them rolled a dry-goods box from the store.

" 'Now,' he said, 'git up on that thar box, an' tell us whar' ye stand.'

"Standing on the box, Father looked at the

party, by irregular means, adopted the anti-slavery Wyandotte Constitution and this, later, was ratified by the people. In 1861 Kansas was admitted to the Union on the basis of the anti-slavery principles of the Free Soil party. The Kansas struggle crystallized the sentiment which brought about the Civil War.

ringleaders and he wasn't showing any signs of scare.

" 'I am not ashamed of my views,' he said, quietly. 'I am not an Abolitionist, and never have been. I think it is better to let slavery alone in the States where it is now. But I am not at all afraid to tell you that I am opposed to its extension, and that I believe it should be kept out of Kansas.'

"His speech was followed by a wild yell of derision. Men began crowding around him, cursing and shaking their fists. One of them jumped up on the box directly behind Father. I saw the gleam of a knife. Next instant, without even a groan, Father fell forward, stabbed in the back.

"I helped Father into a wagon when the crowd had gone.

"The pro-slavers waited a few days, then, when Father didn't die, announced they were coming to our house to finish the work. One night we heard that a party was organized for this purpose. Mother and I took Father and hid him in the corn. Though I was only ten years old, I scouted around all the time, keeping watch. For greater safety we moved him to

A YOUNG INDIAN FIGHTER 113

Grasshopper Falls, with friends, but I got to find out that there was another party after him. I rode hard to give warning and got there ahead of the gang, though they shot at me.

"We moved Father again to Lawrence, an abolitionist stronghold, and, after a time, he returned to Salt Creek. The gangsters started after him again. So he went to Ohio. Last spring he came back to us, desperately ill from the stab-wound he'd got that day I was with him, and which had never healed up. He died soon after getting home."¹

Billy Cody paused a minute or two, then, controlling his voice, he went on:

"You know, Shane, an army has been sent out against the Mormons, mainly because they've refused to accept non-Mormon federal judges. Well, the big firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell are hurrying supplies out to the soldiers.

"Now, I know Mr. Majors pretty well—I call him Uncle Aleck—and struck him for a job. I told him I needed it badly for the support of my mother and sisters. As I can ride as well as

¹ From "Buffalo Bill's Life Story, an Autobiography," Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, a book of great value and importance, which should be in every boy's library.

anybody, he put me at driving cavayard, and here I am, on my second trip out."

"What's a cavayard?" asked Shane.

"Herding the extra cattle always sent along with a wagon train. Uncle Aleck was mighty good, and although I was only eleven years old, he paid me full man's pay, telling me he'd send it to my mother regularly every month."

"You beat me by a year," said Shane. "I was twelve years old when Father was killed and I started tending store at the Hudson Bay post. I tell you, Billy, I'm worrying a lot about what's happened to Mother."

Cody shook his head.

"You needn't," he said. "From what you've told me of 'Coon-tail,' he seems to be all right. And, anyway, a woman isn't ever allowed to suffer in this Western country."

"But how do you suppose I'll ever find her?" queried Shane.

Cody smiled.

"You won't have any trouble," he said. "There's not so many people out here that a man like 'Coon-tail' would pass unnoticed. Nor would your mother. 'Wild Bill' knows everybody. Tell him about your mother. Ten

to one he'll get track of her before he's been in town a week."

Shane took the advice and told his story to "Wild Bill" Hickock, the assistant wagon-master, a golden-haired giant. "Wild Bill" afterwards became a famous gunman, and, while a Pony Express rider, wiped out the McCandless gang in a many-to-one fight which is famous in Western history.¹ Hickock promised to give all the help he could.

A day or two later, after a brief nooning, when they took up the wearing task of marching over those hundreds of miles of prairie, Shane turned to his friend.

"Billy," he said, "I noticed that when Simpson was talking to Elder Lot Smith of the Danite band about you, he called you 'the youngest Indian fighter on the plains.' Why?"

"Because of what happened on my first trip," answered Cody, "the one I got when I struck Aleck Majors for a job after my father's death. I'll tell you just how it was.

¹ For the exploits of Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill Hickock, Pony Bob Haslam, and other famous riders of the Pony Express, for the relation of the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell to that flying service, and for the political issues that were involved, the reader is referred to "The Boy with the U. S. Mail," by the author of this book.

"I was herding a bunch of cattle under Bill McCarthy. We got along, all right, till we made Plum Creek, thirty-six miles west of Fort Kearney, on the South Platte. We were nooning at Plum Creek, the cattle spread out over the prairie to graze, in charge of two herders. Suddenly, there was a sharp 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' and a thunder of hoofs.

" 'Indians! They've shot the herders and stampeded the cattle,' yelled McCarthy. 'Get under the banks of the river, boys—use 'em for a breastwork!'

"We got under there in a hurry. The Platte, a wide, shallow, muddy stream, flows under banks which vary from five to thirty feet in height. We had our guns, and if the Indians showed over the bank we could have made it hot for them.

"McCarthy told us to keep together and to make our way down the river to Fort Kearney, the nearest refuge. It was a long and tiring trip, but our lives depended on keeping to the river bed. Often we had to wade the stream. It was only knee-deep to the men, but it was mighty nigh waist-deep for me.

"Gradually I fell behind, and when night



Courtesy of Pacific Monthly.

"ALL SET! GO AHEAD!"

Wagon-master of a big wagon train pointing out the ford to the teamsters of the prairie schooners, the only means of transportation available in the West in frontier days.

came I was dragging one weary step after another—dog-tired but still clinging to my old Mississippi Yeager rifle, a short muzzle-loader which carried a ball and two buckshot.

“Darkness came and I still toiled along. The men ahead were almost out of hearing.

“Presently the full moon rose, dead ahead of me.

“And, painted boldly across its face, was the black figure of an Indian. There could be no mistaking him for a white man. He wore the war-bonnet of the Sioux, and at his shoulder was a rifle, pointed at some one in the bottom below him.

“I knew well enough that, in another second, he would drop one of my friends. So I raised my Yeager and fired. I saw the figure collapse, and heard it come tumbling thirty feet down the bank, landing with a splash in the water.

“McCarthy and the rest of the party, hearing the shot, came back in a hurry.

“‘What is it?’ asked McCarthy, when he came up to me.

“‘I don’t know,’ I said, ‘whatever it is, it’s down there in the water.’

“McCarthy ran over to the brave.

“‘Hi!’ he cried. ‘Little Billy’s killed an Indian all by himself!’¹

“Not caring to meet any of this Indian’s friends, we pushed on still faster toward Fort Kearney, which we reached by daylight. Soldiers were sent out to look for our comrades and to try and recover our cattle. They found the herders, killed and scalped, but the cattle had been stampeded.

“One of the newspapers wrote me up, so when I asked Aleck Majors for a second job, he said,

“‘You seem to have made a reputation as a frontiersman, Billy. I guess I’ll have to give you another chance.’

“So he sent me along with Simpson, and here I am. So far, I haven’t struck much luck on my trips, have I?”

“You’ve struck plenty of excitement,” commented Shane.

“You haven’t done so badly, yourself,” retorted Cody.

“No,” was the thoughtful rejoinder, “only,

¹ From “Buffalo Bill’s Autobiography.” For historical record it may be well to mention that both Buffalo Bill and “Wild Bill” Hickock actually were with this wagon-train under Simpson, which was turned back by the Danites under Lot Smith.

where you've been shooting Indians and wanting to shoot Danites, I've been making friends with both."

"I don't want their friendship," declared the younger boy, abruptly, and there the subject dropped.

There were many other topics for discussion on that long tramp. Shane, brought up as a trapper, and to whom a fur trading-post was the most advanced form of civilization, had an inner feeling of resentment against the settlement of the country. Billy Cody, brought up as a plainsman, regarded the fur business as a hindrance to the development of a country. His father had been one of the pioneers in the settlement of Kansas, and Billy had been brought up to the idea that anything which prevented the establishment of farms and towns must be done away with.

"Indians have got to go," he said, "fur-trappers have got to go, buffalo have got to go. These prairies we've been crossing could raise millions of bushels of grain, or millions of head of cattle."

In this the young lad was only quoting, parrot-like, the arguments he heard on every side

from his neighbors and his father's friends of the Free Soil party.

The two boys argued this subject up and down. Shane, from his friendliness to the Indians, felt and declared that the United States government had no right to appropriate their lands, and insisted that the redskins were in the right to defend themselves. Billy Cody, while admitting that the Indians deserved fairer treatment than they were getting, repeated over and over again the plainsman's saying:

"There's no good Injun but a dead Injun!"

The fact that their views disagreed, however, made no difference in the friendship of the two boys, and, by the time the month's march was drawing to a close, Shane and Buffalo Bill were the warmest of comrades.

At last the outfit toiled wearily into Fort Leavenworth and great was the excitement when it was spread about that the wagon-train had been stopped by Danites, and that the teamsters had been allowed to escape with their lives.

On their return the Simpson party learned that, only a few days after Lot Smith had stopped them, and sent them back, another band

of Danites had seized a big wagon-train on its way to California, and had killed every one of the 120 men, women, and children in the party. This dire event, known to history as the Mountain Meadows massacre, had stimulated the Government to more decisive measures. The army was ordered to advance, and supplies were rushed even more rapidly to the front.

Shane, who had been with the Danites when the two supply trains were burned—the morning of the day when Simpson's train had been stopped—was called before the commanding officer of the post to tell his story. His information was of great value, for it showed that the advance guard of the army was likely to be exceedingly short of provisions.

After his talk with the commandant, Shane went down the hard dirt road, to rejoin Billy Cody, who was waiting for him at the Russell, Majors, and Waddell stables, when, whom should he suddenly meet on the street, but his mother!

He greeted her with a shout, and she stared at him as though he had come back from the dead.

Great was the rejoicing when she found that it was indeed Shane, safe and sound, and eagerly

did she lead him home to the little log cabin where she lived.

“What’s happened to ‘Coon-tail’?” asked Shane, when, after a hearty dinner, the first excitement of the meeting had subsided.

“He has been a true friend,” answered his mother. “You would hardly believe how kind he has been. We had an awful time getting here, last year. Three times the Crows attacked in force, and, all the way through their country, they were around us, day and night. How we ever succeeded in passing through them, I can’t understand! For three weeks, I don’t believe ‘Coon-tail’ ever slept more than an hour at a time.

“Then, when we got down into the Sioux country, ‘Coon-tail’ was clever enough to make the Sioux believe that the reason the Crows had attacked us was because we were friends of the Sioux. He gave big presents and made friends with the chiefs. I have not the least idea how he arranged it, but we passed through the Sioux country without firing a single shot.”

“And where is ‘Coon-tail’ now?” queried Shane, for he was anxious to see and thank his friend.

But his mother, instead of answering his question directly, went on with her story :

“When we got here, ‘Coon-tail’ was rather at a loss. You see, he had not realized that Kansas was becoming sufficiently settled to support towns, and, as you see, Leavenworth is almost like a little town. Then, there was an American Fur Company agent here, too. So, knowing nothing but trapping, and being in trouble with the Fur Company, ‘Coon-tail’ didn’t know just what to do.

“The trip through the Indian country, with all the responsibility involved, had steadied him a good deal, and he had won the respect of the folks here for having brought us safely through Blackfeet, Crow, and Sioux country. I think we were the first ever to have made such a trip. Because of that, the American Fur Company agent agreed to put ‘Coon-tail’ on the pay-roll and sent him on to Fort Laramie.

“He is a first-class trapper, as you know, Shane, and it was not long before he won success. He sent his very first catch of pelts here to be sold in my name. We owe ‘Coon-tail’ a lot of money now, Shane. Living out here is terribly high.”

"We'll pay that off, Mother," answered Shane, bravely.

"Yes, dear, I am sure we will, but how? I wanted to take in washing, or to do some work of that sort—you know, there are very few women in this place—but 'Coon-tail' said that as long as he was responsible to you for me, I must not do it."

"He's right!" agreed Shane energetically. "If you were strong, Mother, it would be different. Don't worry about the money," he went on, thinking how his friend Buffalo Bill had provided for his mother and sisters; "we'll get along all right. I'll go to Fort Laramie and start trapping with 'Coon-tail.'"

His mother shook her head.

"That's of no use, Shane," she answered. "Fur is getting scarce, and there are more trappers here than there are lines for them to follow. And, Shane dear, being known as 'Coon-tail's' friend would not help you in Fort Laramie. You know him, and even though he's not as wild as he was, he cannot keep his hand off his gun. He's already got into trouble out there, and, you know, Kansas is not nearly as rough as the Forbidden Country."

"Don't worry, Mother," repeated Shane. "It'll be queer if I can't pick up something to do pretty quickly. You'll see!"

Knowing that Billy Cody would be likely soon to start for his home in Salt Creek, Shane hurried off to the big freighting stables. Billy was still there, waiting for him, and Shane frankly told him the causes of his delay. The younger boy rejoiced with his friend at the finding of his mother, and was greatly concerned when he learned of Shane's need for immediate resources.

After a moment's thought, he jumped to his feet.

"Come and see Uncle Aleck!" he suggested. "I was just figuring on going in, before I started home. He'll send you on a cavayard job, maybe."

Majors was willing enough to see the boys and shook hands with them heartily, chaffing Billy about the non-success of his first two trips. But when the project of Shane's employment was broached, the experienced old freighter shook his head.

"Sorry," he said, "but winter's coming on, and bull-whacking in winter needs the toughest

men I can get. It's a very different job from riding along a trail in summer."

He stopped and considered for a moment.

"I'd like to help you out, too," he said. "Wait a bit, I think Billy said that you used to keep store for the Hudson Bay factor, up north."

"Yes, Mr. Majors, I did," Shane agreed.

"Can you keep books?"

Shane wrinkled his forehead, uneasily.

"The records up there were pretty simple," he answered. "I don't know much about real bookkeeping. I can write and cipher pretty well. Mother taught me. She's well educated, is Mother, she went to a convent in Eastern Canada, when she was a girl."

"The deuce she did!" exclaimed Majors. "I wish I'd known that, last winter. We haven't anything like enough school-teachers here in the winter-time. Do you suppose your mother would be willing to teach school?"

"Yes, sir," answered Shane, "I believe she would."

"All right, then," declared the famous freighter, "we'll fix that end of it without any trouble. Now, about you. We're rushing more

and more supplies west, as fast as we can get 'em. I'm short of help in the office. I wonder if you could be of any use? Here, I'll try you!"

He dotted down a line of figures on a sheet of paper and tossed it over to Shane.

"Add those up and write out the answer in words, not figures," he ordered, "that way, I'll see your ciphering and writing at the same time."

Shane did so, though his hand was shaky from long disuse.

"I haven't held a pen for over a year, sir," he said, apologetically, as he handed back the paper.

Majors looked over the figures, saw that the addition was correct, and nodded.

"I'll start you at thirty a month," he said.

Billy beamed.

"When you're hitched up with Russell, Majors, and Waddell, Shane," he said, "you're pulling with the biggest and most important firm west of the Mississippi."

Thus Shane entered his life-work of aiding in the development of the Great West.

CHAPTER VII

BULLOCKS AGAINST MULES

THE winter of 1857-58 passed quickly, and Shane found every moment of interest. Fort Leavenworth was seething with politicians of every shade of opinion. The Free Soil and pro-slavery fight was in full swing. Tricky lawyers from the East jostled buckskin-clad frontiersmen, army officers had desperadoes for their friends. Gun-play was common. Gambling was wide-open.

Owing to his experiences, Shane took a keen interest in all current gossip. His stay with the Blackfeet had not only made him alive to every move, for or against the Indians, but, on more than one occasion, his advice was sought as a young fellow who knew Indians at first-hand. Similarly, his period of semi-captivity with the Danites gave him a personal interest in every move made in Utah towards statehood. Thanks to his friendship with Billy Cody, and

also to his Northern upbringing, Shane had become an ardent Free-Soiler, so that the kaleidoscope of affairs in Kansas kept him on the alert. To a lively-minded boy, there probably was no place in the United States so thrilling with expectancy as Fort Leavenworth at that time.

Majors had been as good as his word, and Shane's mother was teaching school. Hence, by spring, all the money which had been borrowed from "Coon-tail" was paid, and Shane could see his way clear.

With the first touch of fine weather, Billy Cody came to Fort Leavenworth. As the grass grew green, he became restless. He was a natural-born plainsman, and, as he writes in his autobiography, "the master of the frontier-school wore out several armfuls of hazel switches in a vain effort to interest me in the three R's."

For Billy Cody's reappearance in Fort Leavenworth, however, there was a further incentive. Lew Simpson, the wagon-master who had been turned back by the Danites, and with whom Buffalo Bill and Shane had tramped the thousand miles of return journey across the prairies, was organizing a "lightning bull team."

The phrase, in itself, evoked ridicule, for oxen—or “bulls” as they were generally termed—are proverbially slow travelers. A “bull-team,” as a rule, made little more than fifteen miles a day.

At that time, mules were the main basis of quick freight transport, and a first-class mule-team could do forty miles a day. Simpson, however, believed that bullocks could do better than mules on a long haul through grass country. He was willing to bet a good-sized sum of money on his belief. His employers, Russell, Majors, and Waddell, were willing to let him try to prove that a “lightning bull team” could make as good time as mules.

Tom Stewart, a famous “mule-skinner,” jeered at the “bull-whackers,” and lost no time in covering Simpson’s money. The citizens of Leavenworth divided into two parties, those who backed the oxen, and those who backed the mules. Excitement ran high. Every one clamored to get a bet on the race. It became the great sporting event of the spring of 1858. More, it became one of the historic races of the West. It looked like a race between a jack-rabbit and a mud-turtle, but Lew Simpson was

nowise disturbed by the crude jests of the "mule-skinners."

Billy Cody begged Simpson to take him on this race, and the master "bull-whacker," realizing that the boy was a light weight on the saddle, yet a good rider and a first-class shot, agreed. Then Billy begged for Shane to be admitted to the select company of the "lightning bull-whackers."

At this Simpson demurred. Shane had no experience, and, though the bull boss liked the boy, he declared that he would not take any one but the picked best. As a matter of fact, he had his choice of all the "bull-whackers" in the West, each of whom was eager for the success of the long-horns.

At this point Aleck Majors stepped in. He needed another man to Fort Laramie to keep tally of the goods forwarded to that point, and he preferred to let a youngster go, rather than lose one of his more experienced office men. As Simpson's only alternative was to take an elderly man, weighing about 200 pounds, and who was nothing of a shot, he agreed to accept Shane. Billy was raised to the dignity of "extra hand," which meant driving in case of

necessity, while Shane went as "cavayard driver," the job that Billy Cody had the year before. In addition to his work on cavayard, Shane was expected to keep track of the supplies received by the wagon-train and given out, from time to time, to various parties of soldiers.

Under the terms of the bet, the bull-team was to start three days in advance of the mule team for the seven-hundred-and-fifty mile journey. Which ever team got into Fort Laramie first was to be declared the winner. Simpson was convinced that he could not only hold his three days' lead, but better it. Tom Stewart declared that he could get to Laramie and back before the "lightning bulls" crossed the North Platte River.

For some time, Simpson had been engaged in picking out the best "bulls" procurable. Each wagon-train was to be a small one, only three wagons, with six yoke of animals to each wagon and an extra herd of twenty-four. When the chosen long-horns finally were gathered together, every one in Fort Leavenworth agreed that sixty more magnificent animals had never been seen west of the Mississippi.

The day of the start came. According to the

bet, not a hoof should move before sunrise.

By dawn, the streets were filled with people. Every one was out. It had been a night of drinking and gaiety, but Lew Simpson had ordered that his men should stay sober. Not one disobeyed. Half an hour after the first streaks of dawn had shown on the horizon, the bulls were yoked and ready. Every man was in his place.

The morning was chill and frosty, but Shane, on a lively little pony, back with the cavayard herd, was hot with suppressed excitement. The pony felt it, and danced about the road.

The east lightened, grew brighter. The rosy clouds paled into gold, the gold into yellow, and the yellow into a creamy white. Shane held in his hand his bull-whip, with its eight-foot lash and a strip of buckskin on the end for a cracker, and in the cracking of which he had practiced himself daily for two weeks. His wrist was itching in his eagerness to show his prowess.

A fan of rays crept upwards from the eastern horizon. Sunrise was near.

A faint rim of white-yellow fire showed itself, and at the same instant, the mayor of the town yelled,

“Go!”

A dozen pistol shots rang out in a fraction of a second.

Every "bull-whacker," and Shane, as "cavayard driver," swung their bull whips for all they were worth, and the cracking of the whips out-dinned the sharp barks of six-shooters.

The bulls leaned forward under their yokes, their sturdy shoulders bent over to the load, the wheels creaked.

The "lightning bull team" was off!

Tom Stewart, boss "mule-skinner," watching the start, yelled to Simpson as the wagons began the fateful journey,

"We'll catch ye in a couple of days!"

Simpson waved his hat and grinned. He had not only put his faith, but also every dollar he owned, into his long-horned racers.

By the time the lower edge of the sun had cleared the horizon, Shane, driving cavayard at the rear, was almost beyond the last house of the straggling little town of Leavenworth. The last wave of his hat was for his mother, by whose little cabin, in the outskirts of the town, the road passed.

The "bulls" stepped out at a smart pace. The bull-whips cracked venomously. Simpson

had chosen for "bull-whackers" those men who—through some faculty unknown to the inexperienced—could convey through crack of whip or through picturesque expression of objurgation, enough ginger to communicate itself to the slow brains of an ox.

As Simpson knew well, the first ten minutes of a day were the most important. Oxen, if kept up to their work, will walk all day at exactly the same speed as that at which they start, but if the pace for the first ten minutes is slow, no amount of urging will increase it.

So, out from Leavenworth, and over the first stretches of the prairie, the "lightning bull team" struck smartly, and Shane, driving cava-yard behind, kept his herd well bunched and close behind the rearmost wagon. He cracked his whip in huge delight.

In truth, though he did not know it, he had begun his career as a cowboy.

The trail led along the Missouri River, northwards for a few miles and then struck out for the west. Though it was early in the year, the grass was already well grown, giving plenty of feed.

Simpson kept the oxen up to scratch and there

was no loitering. Noonings were long, to give the "bulls" time to feed and water, but the start was made at earliest dawn. Clever handling brought the pace of the "lightning bull team" up to an average of nearly twenty-six miles a day.

Two hundred and fifty miles out, as they stopped for nooning, a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon. There was a moment of uncertainty, for the dust might betoken a war-party of Sioux; but, presently, one of the men who had keen plainsman's eyes, called out,

"Here come the mules!"

The situation for the race looked serious. Here, in nine days' travel, the mules had caught up with the oxen, had already gained the three days which they were only compelled to gain on the entire journey.

The mule team came up smartly, and each and every "mule-skinner" took the occasion to guy Simpson and the rest of the "bull-whackers." They ragged the drivers of the long-horns unmercifully, and offered to tow the oxen along. Stewart wanted Simpson to pay the bets, at once, but the bull-boss only answered,

"You're not in Fort Laramie, yet!"

After the nooning, both teams started together, and by night, the mules were out of sight. The jack-rabbit had easily outstripped the mud-turtle. Some of the men lost heart, and Simpson had hard work to hold them up to their former alertness, but he was a natural leader of men, and the pace of the team was not allowed to diminish. The keen eye of the wagon-master had discerned the signs of weakening on the part of the mules. As long as there were farms, from which the mule-skinners could buy grain, their animals could keep up a good pace, but the time was coming when no more grain could be had. It was on this that Simpson was counting.

Two hundred miles farther on, again a shout went up, but with a difference:

“There are the mules!”

A volume of cheering went up. Any other animals in the world but oxen would have caught the infection, but the “lightning bulls” plodded on, regardless of the cheering, not altering their speed by the fraction of an inch an hour.

The last two hundred miles, as Simpson had expected, had told on the mules. Accustomed to hay and oats, the grass fodder was insufficient

nourishment for a hard trip. At the crossing of the Platte River, the "lightning bull team" caught up with the mules. Four hundred and fifty miles had been covered, and the mules and the oxen were on even terms. It was now a flat race to Fort Laramie.

Stewart chose for his crossing the place where the river was narrowest. But, no matter how many mules he put on a wagon, he mired. The sharp hoofs of the mules sank into the shifting sand and mud of the bottom of the river, and the more they strained the deeper they got. The "mule-skinners" looked worried. Under the terms of the bet, no matter what difficulties they encountered, they must not receive any outside help.

Simpson selected a wide shallow place for his crossing, where the water was nearly a hundred yards across. He put eighteen yoke of oxen on each wagon, lengthening the chains. The bulls wallowed through the sand on their bellies, using their short legs almost like paddles. Thus, the first six yoke of oxen got through without any difficulty, since they had no weight to pull, the burden being taken by the twenty-four oxen behind them, and by the time the

wagon got to the edge of the river, the leaders of the first six yoke were on the opposite bank, where they had a good foothold. Their forward movement helped the bulls who were in midstream, and by the time the wagon got into the deepest part of the water, there were twelve yoke on the bank. The oxen bent until their bellies almost touched the ground, the bull-whips cracked, and the wagon, slowly and without stopping, ground its way through the river. The same was done with each of the three wagons, and the bull-teams went on with less than two hours' delay. The cavayard herd, too, crossed without mishap.

It took Stewart a day and a half to cross, and his mules were in an exhausted state when the third wagon got over.

Four days later, again the cloud of dust, and again the cry,

“Here come the mules!”

This time, however, they gained but slowly, but they passed, just the same.

The apparent victory was brief, however, for the mules were getting poor in condition. There was no longer any chance to urge the mules into a brief trot, as had been done on

favorable stretches of ground in the earlier part of the journey. There was no longer any possibility of ten or twelve continuous hours on the trail. Frequent halts were necessary, and already three mules had fallen and died on the way.

Simpson, with an eye trained to observe the slightest change in his long-horned motive power, had changed the team-animals from day to day, and any ox which showed a perceptible change in condition was sent back for Shane to look after, while a fresh animal from the cava-yard herd was yoked in its place.

For the fourth time, just before reaching the North Platte, the "bull-whackers" again raised the cry,

"There are the mules!"

It was the twenty-first day out. Once more the rivals were neck-and-neck.

The long-horned bulls shambled along, and, that night, the two teams halted not more than a mile from each other.

At the very first flush of dawn, the "lightning bull team" started, and, in half-an-hour, was abreast of the mules. Stewart's teams were not yet hitched up, and, even to Shane's inexpe-



IN THE MULE-SKINNERS' CAMP.

From the broken-out as soon as the "lightning bull team" passed it for the last time.

rienced eyes, the mules appeared little more than skeletons.

This time it was the turn of the "bull-whackers" to chaff and they did so unmercifully. But Simpson would not allow a halt, and passed the word along the line that the "bull-whackers" were to be mighty careful of what they said. The "mule-skinners" saw that they were beaten, and, in their aggrieved state of mind, would be ready to resent an incautious or over-ironical remark, which might lead to bad blood and to shooting.

Simpson drew his gun and rode along the line of the "bull-whackers," swearing grimly that he would drop the first one of his men who laid hand on six-shooter, no matter what was said. The "mule-skinners," eager for a row, which might be made an excuse for their losing, tried to tempt trouble, but the drivers on the "lightning bull team" knew that the bull-boss would be as good as his word, and his was not a hand that would be likely to miss its mark.

The North Platte was crossed without trouble, and the bulls, still fat and in the pink of condition, shambled along to Fort Laramie, which they reached in safety. The mule teams did not

arrive until six days later, thus not only not having gained their three days handicap, but having lost three days additional.

The mud-turtle had outstripped the jack-rabbit!

Great was the rejoicing and riotous was the celebration of the bull-whackers, while Simpson became almost a hero.

Arrived at Fort Laramie, Shane resigned, for a while, his bull-whip, and settled down as a tally-clerk for Russell, Majors, and Waddell. The post was an old frontier post, and when Shane was there in 1858 and 1859, it was the most famous Indian meeting-place on the Plains. As a rule, not less than three thousand Sioux, Northern Cheyennes, and Northern Arapahoes were encamped in the vicinity. Shane made friends with many of the chiefs, and learned to express himself fairly well in the sign language.

In the spring of 1859, Simpson took the back trail as brigade wagon master of three wagon-trains of nine wagons apiece, traveling a day apart. Billy Cody went with him, but Shane stayed at Fort Laramie. They did not meet again until two years later, when Billy, then

sixteen years old, became one of the riders on the never-to-be-forgotten Pony Express.¹

At Fort Laramie, Shane made the acquaintance of Kit Carson, who had driven a herd of sheep from California on learning that supplies for the army were very low, and many stories did Kit Carson, at that time Indian agent at Taos, New Mexico, tell the boy of his explorations with Fremont and his numerous battles with the Apaches.

But the years 1860 and 1861 were to bring graver and greater excitement to Shane than the meeting with the greatest of the last frontiersmen, and even than the establishment of the Pony Express.

After the Civil War had broken out, and the troops had been removed from Fort Laramie, only a small garrison remaining, Indian troubles began.

The Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe, even the northern tribes such as the Crow and the Blackfeet, grew restless. Shane became invaluable to the post. His winter with the Blackfeet had taught him how to handle Indians and he

¹ For Buffalo Bill's exploits at this time, see "The Boy with the U. S. Mail," by this author.

had a natural gift for Indian tongues. He learned Sioux, and became fully proficient in the sign language.

In 1861 he was promoted to the position of being in charge of the Russell, Majors and Waddell affairs in Fort Laramie, which included an oversight of the Pony Express station at that point, and he remained in charge during the first period of the Civil War. In this position, one of his duties was the securing and forwarding of supplies of cattle to the soldiers operating in the West and Southwest. Thus, at an early age, Shane became friends with John Chisum, the famous half-breed "cattle king" of the "Jingle-Bobs" ranch, and with others of the daring men, who, in the teeth of Indian raids, laid the foundation for the great stock industry of the Western States.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PLAINS INDIANS

THOUGH thoroughly loyal to his employers, Russell, Majors, and Waddell, Shane became more and more restless as the tension of the Civil War developed. Despite his interest in the dangerous Indian-menaced journeys of the freight-wagons, in the wild courses of the stage-coaches and the dare-devil riding of the Pony Express, it became more and more impossible for a boy of his mettle to remain quietly at work in an office, keeping the books for a freighting concern, while the momentous events were breaking that followed upon the firing on Fort Sumter.

True, Shane's sympathies had been stirred in favor of the Free Soil anti-slavery party in Kansas through his association with Billy Cody. At the same time, many of his especial friends among the hunters and trappers at Fort Laramie were frontiersmen from Kentucky and

Tennessee, who were, therefore, pro-Southern in sympathy. Thus, Shane was torn in two directions. Moreover, being Canadian-born, he did not feel that it was incumbent on him to enlist. Further, his mother begged him to keep out of the war.

On every side of him, men shouldered the rifles which had never been pointed at human targets except at redskins, to go and fire upon their brothers. In Kansas, "Bleeding Kansas," every day was lurid with possibilities. Nothing but the iron hand of the commandant at Fort Laramie kept the brawling from blazing out in open battle. Shane, himself, learned to keep a tight rein on his tongue, although his position in Russell, Majors, and Waddell's office classed him with the North.

"Coon-tail" enlisted, almost at the very start. Reckless and daring, he soon distinguished himself in the Union Army, and redeemed the evils of his earlier career by a gallant death at Antietam. "Claw" Tolliver, one of the famous feud family, and "Coon-tail's" most bitter enemy in Fort Laramie, joined Stonewall Jackson and fought and suffered for the Gray. "Wild Bill" Hickock, after some spectacular

work as a stage-coach driver and later as a Pony Express rider, joined the western sector of the Union Army as a scout, and did good service.

All these were men whose lives had come close to that of Shane. But, while the boy respected "Coon-tail" as his former leader and appreciated his kindness, while he was close comrade with "Wild Bill" whenever the latter struck town, and while he owed a debt of gratitude to "Claw" Tolliver, who had saved him from a nasty situation when he was accused of being mixed up in one of "Coon-tail's" escapades, it was to none of these three that his boyish hero-worship was directed. All this admiration was given to one man, the most gallant as well as the last of the great frontiersmen of America—Kit Carson.

"Father Kit," as the Indians called him, because of the known fact that he made no promise he did not perform, and spoke no word which was not the truth, was, indeed, the most notable figure of all that hard-riding, hard-drinking, hard-shooting, hard-swearing crowd which wandered in and out of the stockaded gates of Fort Laramie. Hunter, trapper, scout, guide on all the exploring expeditions of the great Path-

finder, Fremont, and, above all, a true pioneer to the Red Man of all that is best in the white race, Kit Carson left an indelible mark on the West and the Southwest.

From his youth he had turned his face to the wilderness where no trails had been blazed, he fought and conquered wild beasts, hostile Indians and lawless white outlaws. He was the first to find the sources of the great river-courses of the West, the first to find passes through the precipitous Rocky Mountains and the Sierras, the first to map in his amazing memory the painted desolation of the bad lands and deserts of the Southwest. To the Indians, he was the voice of Fate, and to him, alone, they would listen. They faced him with the respect shown to a warrior greater than any in their tribes, they greeted him with affection as "the one white chief who does not lie."

When, in the autumn of 1861, it became evident that the Federal Government would have to retire nearly all the troops from outlying points in the West and Southwest, to take part in the great struggle which was rending the nation in twain, Carson saw the menace of the Indians. With the hand of authority removed, there

would be little to prevent the hostiles rising and attacking the outlying settlements. Well Carson knew that if one such raid were performed with impunity, the flame of revolt would run from council-fire to council-fire, with the attendant result of war-parties, massacre, and mutilation.

Carson, therefore, applied to President Lincoln for permission to raise a regiment of volunteers in Wyoming and New Mexico, with the especial purpose of protecting the settlements from Indian menace. As Carson stated, the principal danger was from the Apache to the south, the Ute to the north, and the wandering bands of the Navaho. The government accepted this offer. Shortly afterwards, Carson came to Fort Laramie, seeking some of the men who had been with him on his hunting trips. As soon as Shane learned Carson's plans, he offered himself as a volunteer.

Kit Carson, by this time an elderly man, over fifty years of age, and lame from an injury received the year before when leading a horse down a precipitous cliff, looked sharply at the boy.

"Haven't you got a good job, here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Shane answered, "very good."

"Why do you want to leave, then?"

Shane made a gesture of discontent.

"I don't want to be stuck in an office when there's so much going on," he explained, "and Mother doesn't want me to enlist. Besides, I'm a Canadian, you know."

The frontiersman looked at him reflectively.

"You've had quite a bit of experience for a youngster," he remarked. "I could use you, down on my ranch, and, when I'm away, you could look after my office affairs in Taos."

"But I wanted to join you as a volunteer," protested Shane.

Carson pulled out his six-shooter and handed it to the boy.

"See that empty tomato-can over there," he said, pointing to a tin that glittered in the sun some fifty paces away. "See how many shots it'll take you to hit it!"

Shane raised the heavy revolver and fired twice. Then he strolled over to the can and brought it back to the famous scout. There were two bullet-holes in it.

"Very good," said Carson, "I'll take you. I'm riding south to-morrow."

"I couldn't go to-morrow," replied the boy. "I'll have to stay on the job here until I'm relieved, but I'll come as soon as I can."

"Taos is a good way from here," said Carson, "and I don't believe you know the trail."

"I can find it," was the confident reply.

"Remember," said his new leader, "I'm not taking you just because you can ride and shoot. There are hundreds of men around here who can do that. But there aren't so many who have had a little business training. What's more, the other day you were talking about Chisum and cattle. If you come down to my ranch you'll learn how to handle cattle and that may be more use to you in the future than you realize, now. Then, if there is any Indian trouble, you're to join my regiment. Is that understood?"

"Quite, sir," answered Shane, a little disappointed that, even in going to the Southwest, he was not going to escape from clerical duties.

Carson caught the tone of disappointment, and smiled understandingly.

"My boy," he said, kindly, "I suppose you think my offer doesn't sound exciting enough. You'd like to be out hunting grizzlies, or fighting Indians, or campaigning with an army, every

day in the week. That's natural enough, at your age. I was that way, once, and I'm a little that way, still.

"But you're pretty young, lad, while I'm getting on in years. This wild Western life will last my time, but it won't last yours. Take this staging and Pony Express riding—what will happen to that when the railroads go through? And go through they will."

"I hadn't much thought of that," replied Shane. "It seems so far away."

Kit Carson shook his head.

"At your age," he said, "you've got to do some thinking as to what the future is going to be. The old days are going by, and the new ones are coming in. Don't hitch up with the old, my lad. Youth must prepare for the new. The West is going to be settled mighty fast. And, when it does get settled, what do you think is going to happen to all these hunters and trappers, and gun-men?"

"I suppose they'll go on hunting and trapping."

"Probably, for a while," agreed Carson, "but what will they hunt when all the game is gone?"

"There are enough buffalo to keep hunters

going for a century, I should think," replied Shane. "The Indians have been hunting buffalo long before Columbus ever sailed across the Atlantic, and there's millions of buffalo on the plains still, so the hunters say."

"True enough," answered Carson, "the herds now are figured at about eleven millions. But think for a minute. How did the Indians kill the buffalo? With bow-and-arrow and by stampeding them into traps. Again, what did they want of the buffalo? Only enough meat for their provision and enough skins for tepees and bedding. That demand wasn't enough to reduce the herds much. And, when you get right down to it, the buffalo-hunting Indians aren't so numerous. I don't believe there are more than a hundred thousand, altogether."

"So few as that!" cried Shane, astonished.

The frontiersman nodded.

"Not more," he said. "There are the Cree and Cheyenne, who speak an Algonquin tongue; the Blackfeet, Crows and Sioux, who talk a Siouan tongue; the Ute and Comanche who speak a Shoshonean tongue; the Apache and Navaho who speak an Athapascan tongue; the Kiowa, the only tribe that speaks the Kiowan

tongue; and the Caddo, Arikaree and Pawnee, who speak the Caddoan tongue. Those are all the important Plains tribes and I doubt if there are as much as a hundred thousand altogether."

"But I thought there were millions of Indians in this country!" exclaimed Shane.

"Think a minute," said the old scout. "Remember how you can ride for days in the very middle of the hunting country of a powerful people, like the Sioux, and never see an Indian village. A country as thinly populated as that can't have many people. It's a good thing for us whites that they are so few. If there had been millions, the way you seem to think, the winning of the West would have been mighty hard. The whites are winning out because the Indians are so few.

"I remember, when last I was in Washington for a conference of Indian agents, we worked out the figures as near as we could get them. We figured out that, when the white man first came, there were probably about 1,150,000 Indians on the whole North American continent, of whom 850,000 were in the United States. More than half that number were east of the Mississippi. Of the remainder, a good half

lived in the mountains, in the deserts, in the pueblos, or along the Pacific Coast. That would leave only about 200,000 on the Plains. In the last century at least half that number have been killed off or have died from diseases brought in by the whites, from bad whiskey, and from being thrust on reservations where there is little food, and where the climate is entirely different from what they've been accustomed to.

“Now, for 100,000 Indians to find meat and hides from the buffalo is a very different matter from the hunting of buffalo for the market. Instead of being chased by an occasional Indian brave, with bow-and-arrow, or the annual tribal drive, the buffalo now are hunted by white men, well-mounted, armed with rifles, who are engaged in the chase every day in the week, every month in the year. These buffalo-hunters, as you know, leave the carcasses lying on the plains, taking only the pelts, or, if they do use the meat, they take only the tongues and the tenderloins.

“Right now, there are more buffalo killed every year than the Indians used to kill in ten years. And if, as I hear, they're going to build railroads through the country and feed all the

workmen on buffalo meat, as many buffalo will be killed in a year as the Indians killed in a century. Thus, being killed off more rapidly than they increase, gradually the buffalo will be exterminated."

"It doesn't seem possible," said Shane thoughtfully, thinking of the reports of the countless herds that had been seen wandering over the prairies. "And you think that all this country will then be divided up into farms?"

Kit Carson shook his head.

"No," he said. "A great many people do think so, especially back in Kansas. But I know this Western and Southwestern country, Shane, as, probably, not a single other person in the United States knows it, and I know that the greater part of it is not fit for farming, that the soil is too poor, and the rainfall too scanty. Much of this Western country can never be turned into farm lands, even with irrigation.

"But, my boy, it is sure that if eleven millions of buffalo can find nourishment on the plains, eleven million cattle could do so, and many times more that number if the ground were properly handled. That's why I've taken up ranching. The Spanish and the Mexicans have

showed us the way, and, between 1836 and 1846, when Texas was a republic, the Texans began to carry on the work. As you know, the cattle they raise are mainly long-horns.

“What Texas has done, the Indian Territory will have to do, Utah and Kansas will swing into line and the cattle country will creep gradually to the north as the buffalo go and the Indians are pacified.

“This war will stop everything for a time, but not for long. There’s something bigger even than the slavery question, Shane, bigger than any political question that can come up in the country, my boy, and that’s natural development. Every summer that greens the grass of these prairies will see more and more people on them. The buffalo will go and the cattle will come whether the seceding states succeed in breaking from the Union, or no.”

“Even if the South wins?” commented Shane.

“I doubt very much,” said Carson, thoughtfully, “if the South can win. Of course, they will win at first, for they have the best officers, and they have a stronger sectional feeling. But, Shane, if the war lasts for a long time, the North will win. Why? That’s easy to answer.

Folks who've never seen any fighting think that a war is won by the cleverness of the officers and the gallantry of the soldiers. But those who have seen fighting—and, as you know, my boy, I've seen a good deal of fighting—know that supplies often decide a campaign. The North has the money, the factories, and the wheat-fields. What's more, it has more railroads and better transportation."

"What do you think of the idea that the Northwest will keep out of it?"

Kit Carson shook his head.

"No," he said, "no part of this country will keep out of the war. We're all Americans. Take even Utah, just admitted to statehood. It would risk losing all that it had gained if it tried to take an independent stand. For us Westerners, there's just one thing to do—keep the Indians quiet and let our troops have a free hand. I'm mighty glad, so far as I'm concerned, that the Mormons have made peace, for if they stirred up the Ute, it would be mighty nasty for us in the Southwest."

"But are there any Indians who are really likely to go on the warpath, unless they're pushed to it?" queried Shane. "I've seen quite

a bit of the Sioux and the Blackfeet, and I'm sure they wouldn't."

"The Apache will," declared Kit Carson promptly. "So far as I know, they're the only Indian tribes in this country that are ready for trouble all the time. I'm pretty well known to the Indians and I can powwow any of them into quiet, except the Apache. The only argument they understand is a rifle."

"I couldn't take up arms against the Blackfeet," said Shane thoughtfully, "because, as you know, I've smoked the pipe of peace with them, and I wouldn't like to fight the Sioux, for some of the old chiefs have been mighty good to me. But, from all I've heard of the Apache, I'm ready enough to fight."

"You may have the chance," Kit Carson assured him, "but I warn you that there'll be just as little fighting as I can help. You're coming down principally to help me on the ranch, and, only incidentally, to join the volunteers if we go on campaign."

Accordingly when, a month later, Shane's relief came from Fort Leavenworth, the boy prepared to start out for Taos. He planned to go by Salt Lake City, though he was warned

that the ride south from Salt Lake to Taos led through hostile Ute country. But Shane counted, and, as it afterwards proved, rightly, on help from Elder Lot Smith.

As the boy had expected, he found no difficulty on the trail between Fort Laramie and Salt Lake City. . He rode as an armed escort to a stage-coach, thus getting additional protection for himself and giving additional protection to the coach. Once, indeed, on the way, a small band of Indians came whirling around them, but when four rifles barked, and three of the Indians fell, the rest felt that the odds were too great and rode away after firing a volley of shots, none of which did any damage.

“Lucky for them,” quoth the driver, who was no other than “Wild Bill” Hickcock, this being his last drive before he joined the Union Army as a scout, “with four good rifles I’d stand off a whole tribe!”

This was somewhat boastful, but “Wild Bill” had performed some extraordinary feats in his time, though it was rare that he ever spoke of them.

Arrived at Salt Lake City, Shane inquired at once for Elder Lot Smith and was directed to

the former Danite leader's farm, some fifty miles away. He had gone to agriculture, as he had prophesied to Shane, for, with the entrance of Utah to statehood and with the abandonment of Mormon hostility to the Federal Government, the bands of "Destroying Angels" were no more.

Shane received a hospitable welcome from his former captor, though the old Danite was disappointed that the boy had not reconsidered his decision to be a Mormon. Indeed, he offered him considerable inducements to stay. But, when he learned that Shane was on his way to join Kit Carson, the elder not only made no objection, but sent his eldest son, Amos, to be Shane's guide through the Ute country.

After a week's ride, Shane and Amos Smith raised in the distance the blue heights of two ranges of mountains.

"See those?" queried the Mormon. "To the west is the Jemez Range, to the east the Sangre de Cristo. Between the two lies Taos. I'd go with you to the Rio Grande and show you where the ford is, but there's no need. It's late in the season, and the water won't be high."

"How about the Taos Indians?" queried

Shane. "Aren't they a pretty wild bunch? It seems to me I've heard something about their murdering the governor of the State and going on the warpath generally."

"They did, in 1847," the Mormon replied, "but that's a good time ago and they got a sharp lesson then, one-fifth of the whole tribe being wiped out by the soldiers. Since then, they've been peaceful. But that isn't any reason for not being careful. Keep away from the pueblo, don't ride over any planted fields, and, if you let them alone, they'll let you alone. You ought to make Taos in about three days' ride."

The two young fellows shook hands cordially, Amos Smith repeating his father's urging that Shane return to Utah and become a Mormon. But Shane had been thinking a good deal about Kit Carson's prophecy of the coming of the cattle country. Moreover, several of the wiser heads in Fort Laramie, with whom he had spoken in the month during which he was waiting for release from Russell, Majors, and Waddell's service, endorsed the old frontiersman's belief. So, in answer to the Mormon's offer, Shane answered,

"I'm going to ranch it for a while, anyway."

On breaking camp, next morning, they parted, Amos Smith riding north and Shane setting his face for the two ranges of mountains between which flows the Rio Grande. Three days later he rode into the little bunch of adobe houses which formed the tiny Mexican settlement of Fernandez de Taos, and there he was directed onwards. He camped, that night, on Spoon Creek, and, next day, rode up to the ranch of Kit Carson, which was to be his home for nearly seven years.

CHAPTER IX

THE ROOSTER-PULLING

“SMASH” BUFORD, foreman of Kit Carson’s Ranch, or the Star-Double-Circle, as it was better known, leaned against the fence of the home corral and spat thoughtfully. He was several degrees more discontented than even his usual state of discontent, and “Smash” Buford, as his name implied, was an ugly customer at all times.

Nor was the cause of his discontent far to seek. At the “Come-an’-get-it!” breakfast call of the cook, that morning, not a single one of the Mexican cowboys had rolled out of his blankets. “Smash” had trodden up to one of the recumbent Mexicans and bestowed a vigorous kick where he thought it would do the most good.

“Get up out o’ there, yo’ lazy skunk,” he had ordered, “or I’ll take my quirt an’ make yo’ feel like yo’ had been sleepin’ on cactus-spines all yo’ days.”

The Mexican rolled over and glowered at the husky foreman.

"This feast-day," he said, and made believe to go to sleep again, though he kept one eye on "Smash's" foot.

The foreman swung his leg to administer a second pedal rebuke, but, half-way, checked himself. He had lived for a dozen years in the Southwestern cattle country, indeed, ever since he had been driven out of the South Carolina Mountains for having shot three revenue officers in succession who had penetrated to his fastness to arrest him for making moonshine whisky. Accordingly, he knew the necessity of humoring Mexicans when it came to one of the many feast-days in their religious calendar.

He arrested his second kick half-way, therefore, and, without further comment, went to the mess-shack. He tried to relieve his feelings by picking a quarrel with one of the Texan cowboys who was already hastily swallowing tin cup after tin cup of hot coffee, but in this he was disappointed, too. "Smash" Buford was too well known for his readiness to use his fists for any one to wish to defy him except under the gravest necessity.

There was some reason for "Smash's" annoyance. He had received word the night before that a big bunch of the cattle were drifting south and west toward Pit Canyon, and that was an unhealthy section. If a band got in there, it could not be turned for a dozen miles or more, and Pit Canyon opened into a rough stretch of country famous for affording hiding-places for cattle-rustlers. "Smash" had only five white cowboys left in his outfit, for most of the old hands had gone to enlist in the Civil War and their places had been taken by Mexicans.

Shane, it was true, made a sixth, and despite his inexperience, the boy was shaping up rapidly. But he was a long way from being a "buckaroo" yet. It is only in "movies" and a certain type of sensational "cowboy story" that an inexperienced youngster becomes an accomplished cow-hand in a few months' time. It can be honestly and fairly stated that the talents necessary for making a first-class cow-hand are rare, as rare as a talent for art or for music. And, even with a young fellow naturally fitted for the work, there is a long and painful apprenticeship of rough fare, hard living, dirt,

exposure, danger, horsemanship, the use of the rope, a sense of topography, and a knowledge of the manifold whimsies of cattle, both individually and in herd. It is, to a certain extent, true that a cowboy is born, not made, but it is absolutely sure that, after he has been born, and possesses the peculiar traits it calls for, he has yet to be made. There was never yet a first-class cow-hand who had reached that altitude in less than five years of continuous, grinding toil.

Shane, therefore, while developing well—even to “Smash’s” grumpy ideas—was a long way from being good enough to be sent out through rough country after a straying herd. The foreman, who knew the danger of the loss of a day, itched to send him, but he knew that there was one chance in ten that the boy would break his neck, and nine chances in ten that he would stampede the cattle and make them all the harder to drive.

For himself, as long as the Mexicans were in a feast-day state of mind, he knew he must stay at the home ranch. Individually, the Mexican is fairly reliable, but in groups, Mexicans have an unhappy knack of being ready to follow the counsel of the idlest and most malicious member

of the band. With Kit Carson away, "Smash" knew that he would have to stay around the ranch in case of trouble.

The quickly-swallowed breakfast over, the foreman had sent the four Texans out to do their best to turn the cattle from the Pit Canyon country, or, at least to hold them, if possible, until the following day, when he would come with the whole Star-Double-Circle outfit. His own enforced idleness added to his bad temper, and, by the middle of the morning, "Smash" was in dangerous mood.

Since little escaped his notice, he had seen that each of the Mexicans had taken one of his horses from the corral. This was altogether natural and to be expected. Mexican cowboys, or vaqueros, as they were still called in New Mexico in those days, went afoot a hundred yards only when compelled, and would not walk a mile except under the most urgent necessity.

As the morning wore on, "Smash" noticed that, down in the bottom, below the aspens, the Mexicans seemed to be congregated, watching several of their members who were making short bursts of speed on horseback. Knowing Mexicans, the foreman was well aware that these

could not be horse-races, for, on a ranch, the speed of every pony is known to the fraction of a second, and eager as are the Mexicans for the joy of betting on a horse-race, there could be no such sport on the ranch, for there would be no element of chance. No, this must betoken something else, and the foreman rolled himself another cigarette and started in the direction of the group.

As he drew nearer, he saw that it was just what he had suspected—a rooster-pulling.

This characteristic sport of the Mexican vaqueros calls for great skill, but there is a savor of cruelty about it which has caused it heartily to be condemned by white cowboys. A rooster is buried in the ground, up to his neck, which, therefore, protrudes as far as the tortured bird can stretch it. Each rider, in turn, must gallop by at full speed, and, releasing one foot from the stirrup he must almost throw himself out of the saddle, leaning over far enough so as to grasp the swaying neck of the rooster as he gallops by. If, securing a firm grasp, he succeeds in pulling off the neck of the poor fowl, then he gets the bird for his evening's supper as a prize.

It was this Mexican sport which originated the trick of picking up a handkerchief from the ground when galloping at full speed which has since become a common event in Wild West shows and cow-town rodeos.

Rooster-pulling, however, was forbidden on the Star-Double-Circle ranch, as it was on every white-owned ranch in the country. Many ranch-owners, however, while forbidding it, closed their eyes to the practice on days of special holidays among the Mexicans. "Smash" was in no such tolerant mood.

He strode up to the group just as Paulo Varez came galloping down, and, roughly thrusting aside the standing Mexicans who were watching, he placed himself astride the half-buried bird.

The galloping pony swerved, just as Paulo had begun the action of throwing himself out of the saddle. None but the most perfect rider could have avoided a dangerous fall, but Paulo, with a tremendous effort, swung himself back. He pulled up the pony savagely, leaped to his feet and whirled on "Smash," a knife appearing in his hand with incredible swiftness.

But "Smash" had not lived nearly all his



MEXICAN VANQUEROS.

On the way to the rooster pull, in defiance of the orders of "Smash,"
the big foreman of the ranch.

life with a six-shooter at his belt without knowing how to use it, and with a motion which was fully as quick as that of the Mexican he drew his gun. Huge as was that mighty right hand, its movement was like lightning.

The Mexican swore, and kept his knife in readiness.

“Drop that knife!” came the foreman’s crisp order.

Paulo scowled. He did not drop it, but stuck it back in his belt.

“I said ‘Drop it!’ ” ordered “Smash” in a harsher tone.

The Mexican shook his head.

“An’ have you come hit me?” he retorted. “Not such fool.”

As matters stood, he had the advantage. “Smash” would not shoot, save in self-defence. On his part, the foreman, seeing that the moment of possible attack had gone by, moved a couple of feet sideways.

“Miguel,” he ordered, turning to another of the Mexicans, but, at the same time, keeping Paulo well within the range of his vision, “take that shovel and dig up the rooster.”

The younger Mexican, with an apologetic look

at Paulo, stood still, but when "Smash" took a threatening step in his direction, he picked up the spade.

The freed rooster, so far none the worse for his encounter, scurried off as soon as he was released, and "Smash," with a fine show of scorn, turned his back on the Mexicans and sauntered back.

Like a cat the Mexican leapt forward, his knife out once more.

The foreman wheeled instantaneously. If he had not eyes in the back of his head, it seemed like it, and, as he wheeled, he drew.

Again the tableau was repeated, the Mexican foiled by the quickness of the draw, and his arm crooked for the sideways upward thrust which marks a stab from the back.

"So yo' hold a grudge, Paulo!"

This was more serious. That the vaquero should have drawn a knife in the vexation of being foiled in his rooster-snatch was something that could easily be passed by. But that he should draw it a second time, not under provocation, meant revenge, and a Mexicar's revenge rarely stops short of a killing.

"Go up to the ranch-house an' get yo'r time,

Paulo," said the big foreman, after a moment's consideration. "If I see yo' on the place after sundown, I'll shoot yo' like the white-livered knife-drawin' Greaser that yo' are. Move now, or I'll shoot off one of yo' ears so's yo'll have something to remember me by!"

Mighty is the influence of the "drop"! Paulo did not ask whether "Smash" were serious. There was no need to ask. And, as the Mexican knew, if "Smash's" finger should close in on the trigger, he would be less an ear. The foreman would not miss.

Sulkily, Paulo turned on his heel and walked up the slope to the ranch-house.

"Is there any mo' of yo' that wants to get gay with a knife?" queried "Smash," glancing round the circle of Mexicans, but, at the same time, keeping an eye on the receding figure of Paulo. "If there is, yo' can let me know, an' I'll shoot off his ear first, so as to save the trouble o' havin' to do it, after."

No one responded to this kind invitation, and "Smash," disdaining further talk, returned to his post by the corral and to his former gloomy thoughts with regard to the cattle straying into the Pit Canyon country.

Paulo Varez, rage and vengeance in his heart, went straight to the ranch-house, where he found Shane.

"'Smash,' he send me here to get my time," was his only remark.

Shane looked up in surprise. Whatever passions may have been seething in the vaquero's mind, his face did not show them. He was rolling the typical cigarette, in brown paper, with one hand, as though he were doing it in the saddle, and there was a smile on his face. The smile may have been for Shane, who was popular on the ranch.

"Why? Have you been fired, Paulo?" asked the boy, amazed, for he knew this was a Mexican holiday, and therefore the trouble could not have arisen with regard to work.

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders.

Shane hesitated a moment, while he thought the matter out. He knew "'Smash'" fairly well, and though he did not like the foreman, he was compelled to respect him. He knew that Kit Carson would not have made him foreman unless he were a first-class man. As a matter of fact, "'Smash'" Buford was one of the best cattle-men in the Southwest, and, besides, he

could handle himself in any emergency that might arise. In those days, a man who could not take care of himself would not last long as foreman of a ranch in either Texas or New Mexico.

Shane realized, therefore, that he must be careful not to offend the foreman. He wished, with all his heart, that Kit Carson was at home, but the old scout had ridden north on hearing that there were signs of discontent among the Ute, and he hoped to effect a peaceful settlement before the Indians should actually get on the war-path.

Kit Carson, as he had promised, finding that Shane was reliable and really anxious to learn, had taken him into his confidence to a greater degree than he had given to any one else on the ranch. Shane had the gift of loyalty, and he looked after his employer's interests as though they were his own. No element of success is surer than this.

Accordingly, as Paulo Varez stood before him, waiting to be paid off, Shane wondered what he ought to do, in order to protect the best interests of the ranch. If Paulo wanted to go, even by his own wish, it would be a serious loss, for

Paulo was the best roper on the ranch and a first-class cow-hand. If he had a grievance, then it would be dangerous to let him go. Shane had learned a little of the clannishness of Mexicans, and, if Paulo left, all the other Mexicans might throw up their jobs. This would spell disaster, since so many of the regular cowboys had gone to join the army, most of them being with the Texas regiments on the Confederate side.

Shane, therefore, made no move towards paying out the money.

Paulo, misinterpreting the boy's hesitation, ceased to smile. A bitter anger crept into the hard black eyes.

"‘Smash’ drunk?" queried Shane, though he knew the question to be unnecessary, for there was no liquor on the ranch, and the foreman would not drink the home-brewed Mexican stuff.

"No, not drunk," answered Paulo, honestly. "Just mad."

"See here, Paulo," then said the boy, deciding to try reasoning with the famous roper, "suppose the boss was home, would you want to go?"

“ ‘Smash’ he tell me to go, not the boss.”

“I know. But do you want to go?”

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders again.

“What happened?” asked Shane curiously.

He expected nothing more than another non-committal shrug of the shoulders, but, to his surprise, the Mexican answered promptly.

“To-day, feast-day,” he explained. “Me an’ some more have little rooster-pull. I bet three days’ pay on my chance. ‘Smash’ he interfere. I get mad. I draw knife, he draw gun.”

He shrugged his shoulders again.

Shane wrinkled his forehead in perplexity. Rooster-pulling was forbidden on the ranch. So far, then, the foreman was entirely within his rights. At the same time, it was a well-understood policy that, on special feast-days, the Mexicans were to be allowed a fairly wide latitude of behavior.

To lose one of the best hands on the ranch over sympathy for a scrawny rooster, was, to Shane’s idea, poor business.

What action was he to take?

If he refused to obey “ ‘Smash’s’ ” orders, there was not a shadow of a doubt that such non-support would provoke insubordination to the fore-

man among the cow-hands, and the chances were ten to one that "Smash" would quit cold, since any one of a dozen ranches would be only too glad to have him. To lose "Smash" Buford would be an even greater loss than to lose Paulo. How was he to keep them both?

True to the habit he had contracted of dealing openly with every question that came up, Shane decided to put his difficulty squarely before the Mexican.

"See here, Paulo," he said, "I'm sure, if the boss were here, he'd fix things up, some way. Now, you knew that rooster-pulling was against the rules of the ranch."

"Sure," agreed the vaquero.

"So 'Smash' was right enough in stopping it."

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders.

"And you wouldn't have got sore if you hadn't had some money on it, would you?"

Again the shoulder-shrug.

"Good," agreed Shane, feeling that he was making progress. "Now you're one of the best ropers on the place. I heard the boss say, one day, that you were one of the best ropers in New Mexico or Texas."

The Mexican's eyes glistened at the compliment. In the cow country, to be called a first-class roper is the height of praise, far higher than to be praised as a good rider or a good shot.

"The Cross-Double-Circle doesn't want to lose its best roper, that's a cinch," declared Shane, "but you know 'Smash' well enough to be sure that if I refused to pay off a man he'd fired, he'd quit himself."

"Buenos—so much the better," quoth Paulo.

"For you, yes," agreed Shane, "but not for the Cross-Double-Circle."

"I want money," declared Paulo, growing tired of this long discourse.

"You'll get your money, all right," said Shane. "I haven't the right to keep it from you. I'm not in charge here. But I know, pretty well, what the boss wants.

"See here, Paulo, suppose I give you your pay, but keep you on the pay-roll, just the same. You take a holiday, that's all. Your pay goes on, just the same. Since you're still with the Cross-Double-Circle outfit, you can't hire out to any other outfit."

"You pay me for doin' nothin'?"

"That's about it."

"Maybe the boss, he say 'no,' " commented Paulo.

"Then the boss can take it out of my pay. If you'll take a holiday, Paulo, and guarantee not to hire with any other outfit, I'll guarantee you get full pay. What do you say?"

"To get money an' do nothing? I say 'yes,' sure!"

"All right," said Shane cheerfully, "now I'll figure out your pay, up to to-day."

The Mexican looked at the boy curiously, as the latter went over the books.

"Why you do this?" he queried, rolling another brown cigarette.

"Because," Shane answered, "a ranch is a good deal like any other kind of place. It succeeds or it fails because folks work together or because they don't. You like the boss, don't you?"

"Every one like boss," was the ready reply.

"It would be a shame if things went wrong when he was away, when you and I could prevent it, eh?"

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders, but assentingly.

Shane, having made up the account, now went to the strong-box and paid out the money. Paulo took it, and dropped the cash into an old greasy purse.

As he turned to go out, he flung over his shoulder, as though carelessly,

“I live San Jacopo. Come see me, some time.”

It was not ranch ethics for a white man to go to a Greaser settlement, but Shane responded promptly,

“Right, Paulo. I’ll come.”

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE ON GRINNING JUNIPER

WHEN Paulo Varez had left, Shane promptly locked up the strong box and hid the key in the place known only to Kit Carson and himself, and set out for the corral, to have a chat with "Smash" and to tell him exactly what he had done, and why he had done it.

The foreman listened to the boy's recital without a word until he had finished, and then nodded.

"Yo' got yo' nerve," he said, "to keep a hombre on the pay-roll after I've told yo' to take him off."

Shane looked squarely at the foreman.

"What's the use of a chap if he hasn't got nerve?" he asked.

"Smash" smoked a while in silence. Quick with his hands and quick in problems relating to cow-work, in everything else his brains moved slowly.

“Seems like I’d oughter be mad with yo’,” he said, at last, “but I ain’t. I’d ha’ been mad, if one o’ those soapweed Greasers had come an’ yapped to me about it. But yo’ come to me like a man an’ told me straight. But when I say a thing, it goes! An’ pronto! I told Paulo to get off’n the place by sundown. Is he goin’?”

“He’s gone.”

After a pause, “Smash” turned the subject.

“Want to go along to Pit Canyon in the mornin’?”

This was equivalent to a full reconciliation, and Shane so recognized it, for “Smash” was loth to take him on any serious piece of work, as yet.

“If you think I can handle it,” he answered, gladly.

Again “Smash” nodded.

“Yo’ll make a cow-hand yet,” he said. “Fo’ one thing, yo’ know that yo’ don’t know it all. Yo’ can take ‘Barbed-Wire’ out’n my string.”

This generous offer told two things. In the first place, it meant that “Smash” was willing to trust Shane with a good horse, and, in the second place, it showed that the band was going to a section of the country where there was no

barbed wire. The pony in question, a first-class cow animal, had once got entangled in a piece of loose barbed wire and had cut and scratched himself badly before being released. Since then, the mere sight of a barbed wire fence set him bucking so that it took a "buster" to sit him. Hence his name.

"Pack yo' gun an' take some pills along," remarked the foreman, after Shane had thanked him.

From which words, the boy realized that "Smash" did not regard the morrow's venture as a Sunday School party.

In those days, range rights and water rights in New Mexico were more or less vague. For this there were historic causes, some of which cause trouble even to this very day. These were the Mexican and Spanish land grants under which most of the land in New Mexico was held.

At the close of the Mexican War, these land grants, incredibly entangled by transfers, sales and subdivisions, were confirmed by the treaty of Guadeloupe-Hidalgo, but for decades it puzzled lawyers and commissions to find out exactly what it was that the treaty had confirmed.

While slavery—in the sense of negro slavery—did not exist in that section, peonage did, and Indian captives were openly bought and sold as slaves. Irregular forms of tenancy further complicated the matter, and pasturage rights were granted by absentee owners who had never even seen their lands. At the time that Shane went to Kit Carson's ranch, therefore, there were Spanish claims, Mexican claims and American claims to various adjacent sections of lands, none of which agreed. As the American courts generally decided in favor of an American claim as against a Spaniard or a Mexican, bad blood resulted. The consequence was that, in some of the wilder sections of New Mexico, the law of the six-shooter was the Court of Final Appeal.

In such a medley of ownership, it followed, naturally, that certain large stretches of territory, claimed by three or four different owners, became a sort of No Man's Land wherein every man regarded the other as an intruder. A herd of cattle straying into such a section invariably caused trouble. The further result of this was that the No Man's Lands became the abiding-places of gangs of horse-thieves, cattle-rustlers

and road-agents whose fastnesses no one cared to penetrate.

Pit Canyon was such a section. The northern entrance of the canyon was, without any question, on Kit Carson's land. The southern entrance was in No Man's Land. But, what was worse, if the cattle had actually entered Pit Canyon, there was no way to turn them back except by riding out over what was known as "Grinning Juniper Slope" because of the number of human skulls which decorated its dreary sides. While a chapparal country in general, this part of the foothills was marked by dense clumps of gnarled and stunted juniper, very old, many of them forming small forts. Between the thick gnarled stems were spaces that formed loopholes through which a defender could fire, himself protected by the tough wood, from which a bullet glanced off as though it had struck a steel bar. The rest of the vegetation, grease-wood, mesquite, sage-brush, and rabbit-brush did not grow high enough to obscure the aim.

That night, the four Texans who had been set out to try to head off the cattle, rode in, dispirited.

"We're snubbed, 'Smash,' " said "Slide"

Wesson, the leader, reporting. "We turned about a hundred head back, but the rest o' the bunch got by. If the whole outfit had been along, we'd ha' twisted their tails, sure, but they're promenadin' up the canyon, now, like they was goin' to a dance."

"Smash" brought his huge fist down with force enough to drive a tent-peg home.

"An' those three-for-a-cent Greasers have got to take a holiday an' lose us—"

He stopped, gloomily.

"It means Grinning Juniper, eh, 'Smash'?" queried one of the other men.

"Reckon so. Yo' want to quit!"

The cow-puncher laughed.

"I got no canary feathers, an' you know it," launched the other, whose nickname was "Hard Jaw," "but I ain't locoed enough to brand it as a pleasant ride."

"Will the Greasers stick, do you think?" queried "Slide."

"I 'low it," responded "Smash," "so long as they know I'm ridin' behind, with a gun on my hip."

"When do we start?"

"Midnight," said the foreman. "The

moon'll be up by then. We'd oughter be through Grinning Juniper afore sun-up. Roll in, boys, as soon as yo' get chuck."

After supper "Smash" took Shane aside.

"If yo' want to back down on goin'," he said, kindly enough, "I won't hold it against yo'. After all, yo're but a youngster, an' there may be shootin'."

"Do you want me to come, 'Smash'?" asked the boy.

"If yo' come willingly, yes," said the foreman. "Countin' yo' an' me, there's only six whites an' eleven Greasers in the outfit, an' I want every white man I can get."

He did not add, though he thought of it, that Shane's popularity with the Mexicans would be an asset in case of treachery. This was, indeed, the foreman's main reason for taking the boy.

"I'll be there on both feet," Shane agreed emphatically, and hurried off to the bunk-house to get in as much sleep as he could.

It was black dark when he was wakened. The day horse-wrangler had stayed up, roped and held out the horses chosen. As soon as the moon rose high enough to give light, saddling was

quickly done. An extra pack-horse carried some provisions.

The pace was a steady one, but not fast. Evidently "Smash" was sparing the horses. Even so, it was Shane's first night ride over rough country. That it was dangerous he knew from "Smash's" final injunction before starting, to toe his stirrups so that he would be flung free if his horse stepped into a hole and fell.

The arroyos presently began to get on Shane's nerves. In the moonlight, which cast uncertain shadows, some of these little narrow dry gullies looked shallow, and were deep; others looked deep, and were shallow. Riding over an arroyo-cut country at night means a tight grip on the saddle and an even tighter grip on the nerves. A horse sees better in the dark, than a man, so loose reins gave the ponies their own way.

Dawn was breaking when Grinning Juniper Slope was reached. While rough country, it was a little less broken than the rolling rocky ground, still bearing traces of its volcanic origin, over which the outfit had ridden during the night.

The Mexicans bunched together, as the point of danger was reached.

"Smash" touched the big wheel spurs to his horse and rode up.

"No talkin'!" he ordered crisply. "Yo' all had better keep yo'r chins from waggin'. I ain't aimin' to stir up any nest o' rustlers! Sabe?"

With which warning, he dropped back again to the rear.

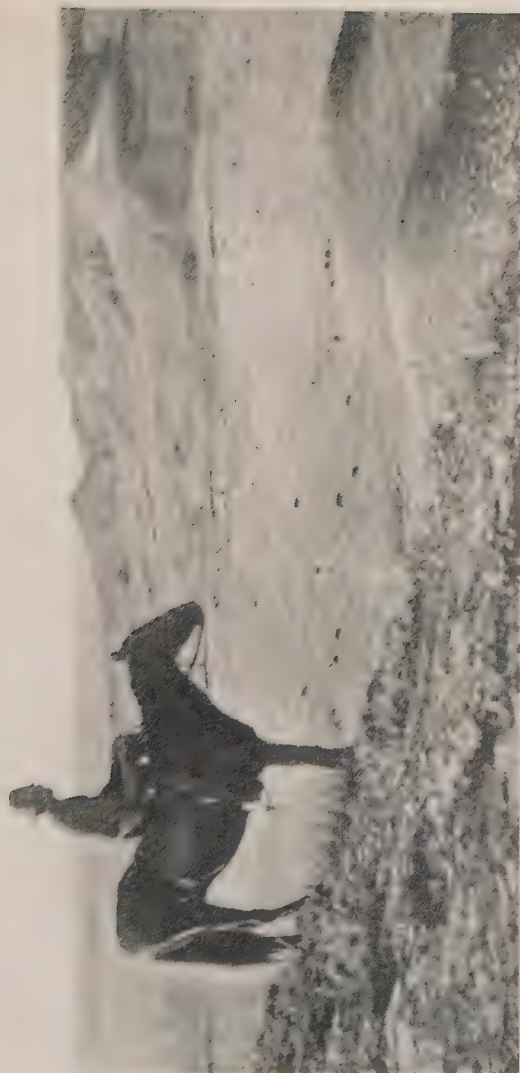
"What's the idee, 'Smash,' " asked "Slide," in a low voice, edging up to the foreman, "hoofs an' saddle-creakin's can be heard twice as far as talk."

"Yo're an A1 cow-hand, 'Slide,' " returned the foreman, "but yo' head's the lightest part o' yo'. I ain't aimin' none to have the Greasers bolt in a bunch. If the gang doesn't sabe what the others are thinkin' of, they can't do nothin' together."

The cowboy nodded in comprehension of this prudent advice, and the seventeen men rode on in silence.

The sun rose, however, before they were fully across the slope, and, near the farther side, suddenly they saw a single horseman riding slowly forward to meet them.

"'Slide,' " said the foreman, beckoning him



Courtesy of Pacific Monthly.

ON GRINNING JUNIPER.

No Man's Land in New Mexico, the former haunt of Cattle-rustlers, and still a disputed territory.

with a nod of the head, "stay back with the kid."

He gave instructions to the other three Texans, in obedience to which one rode up to flank the band on the right and the other on the left. The third rode ahead. This done, the foreman dropped back to the rear.

"I've given orders," he said, "that the first Greaser who shows any signs o' boltin' is to get a dose o' lead, right thar an' then. If any o' them break back this way, yo' can give your trigger finger a little easy work." He turned to Shane. "Thar ain't no reason for yo' to do any shootin'," he went on, "onless a big bunch breaks back, more'n 'Slide,' here, can handle alone."

His dispositions thus made, "Smash" rode forward to the front, joining "Rabbit Foot," the Texan in the lead.

"Is there going to be trouble, 'Slide,' do you think?" queried Shane.

"Headin' fair for it," answered "Slide." "But if thar's goin' to be any playin', you can bet 'Smash' 'll have the cards. He's ace-high when it comes to trouble an' as quick with a gun as with his fists."

The pace increased, for "Smash" was letting his horse go, and the other cow-ponies, all of mustang blood and never willing to be left behind, began to stretch themselves. No one drew rein, for the Greasers, as much as any one else, wanted to be across this dangerous section. Just a couple of miles farther on, the hills merged into sage-brush plain, where there was no chance of ambush.

The solitary rider had drawn up, and was waiting.

At the same moment, "Smash" and "Rabbit-foot" made a gesture as though drawing in, and, at the same time, put the quirts to their ponies.

It was so sudden, so unexpected that, before the stranger realized what was happening, the two Cross-Double-Circle men were on him, one on either side, and "Smash," leaning out of the saddle, threw his giant arm around the stranger and picked him clean out of the saddle.

At the same moment, "Rabbit-foot," as he passed, struck the stranger's animal a vicious cut with his quirt.

"Slide," who had been closely watching the manoeuvre, understood the plot at once, and,

spurring forward, he lashed the ponies of the rearmost Mexicans. The other two Texans, on either flank, did the same, and the ponies burst into a mad gallop. The riderless horse wheeled and broke also.

A dozen shots rang out. Two of the Greasers swayed in their seats, and "Hard Jaw," the Texan who was guarding the left flank, fell forward, though sticking to his saddle.

"Get up thar, you Shane, an' quick!" ordered "Slide." "If any o' the Greasers try to break away to the east, shoot!"

Shane put spurs to "Barbed Wire," and, with a preliminary buck which nearly unseated his rider, the flea-bitten gray commenced to overhaul the racing band.

Suddenly the boy felt a sharp stinging pain, as though a long cactus spine had suddenly been thrust in the seat of his trousers. The pang was immediately followed by a sensation of sickness. But he paid no heed to it, his mind set on reaching the post held by "Hard Jaw."

He was there none too soon. The Mexicans were edging away, when "Barbed Wire" came thundering up.

As he rode, Shane had a sudden sight of men

rising from behind the juniper clumps and a sudden volley came, scattered, however, for there were no repeating rifles in those days, and a man had to reload.

"Smash" and "Rabbit Foot," the former holding the leader of the band captive across his knees, were still riding as fast as their beasts would carry them, though "Smash's" horse, notwithstanding that it was the most powerful animal on the ranch, began to tire under the double burden.

Very few moments sufficed to take them out of range and, a few minutes later, the whole cavalcade swept down into the sage brush plain.

On a slight eminence, where he could overlook the plain, "Smash" drew up and turned his captive over to the Texan, who deftly took a turn or two around the prisoner with this lariat and disarmed him. The foreman, then, turned to find out the result of the two volleys. "Hard-Jaw," whose place Shane had taken, was badly hurt. He was coughing blood, and a brief examination showed that the bullet had gone through the lung.

They helped him off his horse and laid him down on the ground.

"We headed 'em!" he said, with a faint note of triumph, and collapsed. He never recovered consciousness. In a few minutes he was dead.

The other two Mexicans were not badly hurt. One had a bullet through the fleshy part of his shoulder. The other had a narrower escape. The bullet had struck a rib and glanced aside, making a flesh wound.

It was while this examination was going on, that one of the Mexicans uttered a sharp cry and pointed to Shane's chapps, from the bottom of which blood was dripping, drop by drop.

"Where did they get yo'?" asked the foreman, anxiously.

Then Shane remembered the sensation of the cactus-spine, and, at the same moment as he realized this, he became conscious that his leg was throbbing abominably.

"In the leg, I guess," he answered, as nonchalantly as he could, not wanting to show cowardice before his comrades.

They helped him off his horse. The bullet had struck the saddle and ricocheted slightly, going through his skin on the underside of one thigh and through his trousers only on the other.

"Reckon yo'll have to eat yo' chuck

standin','' was the foreman's comment, relieved to find that the injury was so slight.

"What'll we do with this cuss?" queried "Rabbit-Foot," who was still holding the captive. "Have to tote him down to the sheriff at Santa Fè, I suppose, eh?"

"Smash" took a look at the body of "Hard-Jaw."

"Reckon I'll be sheriff, myself," said he, grimly.

He turned to the man.

"What's yo' name?"

"Which one?" came the callous response, "I travel with a string o' them."

"Yo're tellin' truth thar, I reckon," retorted the foreman. "Which one do you want to go west on?"

The prisoner shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't know as it'll make any difference, over there."

"Have yo' got anything to say?"

"Nothin' likely to interest you."

"Any messages?"

"None I'd give you to carry."

"Well," said the foreman, pulling out an old battered watch, "yo' got just ten minutes.

Yo' don't need to be told what's goin' to happen. Yo' know me, I reckon."

"Yes," was the quiet answer, "I know you, 'Smash' Buford. Maybe better'n you think, but that's no matter, now."

There was a long, dead silence.

"Five minutes gone," said "Smash."

"There's one thing I'll ask," broke out the stranger, at last. "I don't want to be left for the coyotes. Since you're goin' to be sheriff, judge an' jury an' all the rest of it, you might as well be grave-digger."

"I'll do that," said "Smash," "though it ain't comin' to yo'."

"One other thing. Don't let any one go through my pockets. I've got papers on me, private papers. There's no need for any one to know what I was once. You can understand?"

"Yes," said "Smash," "yo' got a right to ask that. I give yo' my word."

"Thar's a bunch o' bills in my left-hand pocket," the stranger went on. "Give 'em to Kit Carson an' tell him to spend 'em for any one he knows of that's in trouble."

"Smash" put his hand in the man's pocket

and pulled out the bills. He handed them to Shane.

"Count 'em," he said briefly.

Shane did so.

"Seven hundred and three dollars," he announced.

"Keep 'em and give 'em to the boss."

He turned to the stranger.

"The kid keeps the pay-roll down at the Cross-Double-Circle, so yo' can see it's all square."

"I'm satisfied," was the captive's only comment.

Again a pause.

"Time's up," said the foreman.

"Shoot an' be done with it," came the scornful reply.

"Smash" turned to the crowd.

"I take yo' all to witness," he said, with a certain rude solemnity, "that this hyar prisoner's gang shot an' killed 'Hard-Jaw' an' no provocation given. Blood for blood. I aim to give myself up to the sheriff an' stand my trial for this shootin'."

Then, to the rustler,

"Once more, anything to say?"

“What’s the use o’ talkin’ at the end o’ the trail? Shoot!”

There was the flash of a gun in “Smash’s” hand and a report.

The man fell dead, the side of his head blown in.

With no other tool than his knife, and without a word, “Smash” dug a shallow grave. No one offered to help. The foreman had given his word. With his own hands he put the body in the shallow pit and heaped a pile of stones over it.

That done, with one of the other men helping, “Hard-Jaw” was interred in similar fashion. The Mexicans looked on, smoking cigarettes as imperturbably as they had done during the entire scene.

Then Shane was helped back into the saddle, with a little difficulty, for his leg felt stiff, and the whole party rode on slowly through No Man’s Land toward the southern entrance of Pit Canyon.

“Swift dealin’!” remarked “Slide” to Shane, when they were on the trail again. “I tol’ you ‘Smash’ wasn’t the man to let any one get the start on him.”

"Yes," said Shane, hesitatingly, "durn swift. It looked cold-blooded, though!"

"I couldn't ha' done it," admitted the Texan, "but I'm not sayin' nothin' contrary to it. That was 'Run-'em-off' Steve, one o' the worst horse-thieves an' rustlers in these parts."

"How do you know?" queried Shane.

The puncher shrugged his shoulders.

"This is his lay an' I recognized one o' the gang as his side-kick when we was ridin' by. But you can't never prove a thing like that, kid, an' 'Smash' wasn't goin' to waste time tryin' to. We wasted enough time, diggin' graves, as it is."

"Why? Think the gang will follow?"

"Slide" reflected.

"They'd ha' played for a rescue, sure," said he, "if we'd tried to take 'Run-em-off' to the sheriff. But a dead man is out o' the game an' his gang is more like to be raisin' ructions among themselves as to who'll be leader next, than they are to risk bein' shot up when there's nothin' to gain by it. If they'd ha' stopped us on Grinning Juniper, they'd ha' got the cattle. Now, we're goin' to get 'em."

"Slide" was right. Another hour's riding

brought them to the southern entrance of Pit Canyon, and, since the cattle were nowhere to be seen on the flats, there was good reason to suppose that they had lingered, eating the sweet grass which grew in a few spots in the gorge.

A halt was made for breakfast, and Shane found himself wandering that it should be so early. The morning's adventures made it seem to him as though a long day had passed, yet the sun was not more than two hours high.

While one of the Mexicans was preparing breakfast, "Smash" took the occasion to explain himself to Shane.

"This sort o' handlin'," he said, "wouldn't go in Texas, nor anywheres but hyar, I reckon. But thar ain't no Vigilance Committees in this section an' a man's got to be his own law. If a case like this got into court, hyar, there'd be so much foolin' aroun' as to whose land it happened on, that 'Run-'em-off' would ha' gone free. An' I wasn't goin' to have the man who shot 'Hard-Jaw' rampin' around loose.

"An' so far as 'Run-'em-off' is concerned, I don't see much what difference it makes to him now whether he's shot by me or hanged by Vigilantes or trussed up by a sheriff. He

Texans, therefore, had to guard themselves against a race hatred fanned by war. And Shane, as he watched the foreman, day after day, month after month, dominating by his sheer personality the score of men who longed to knife him, admired him more and more.

As for "Smash" himself, the situation was difficult enough. He was, like all the Texans, Confederate in sympathies. Not for worlds would he have given a hand to the Union cause. But he was "wanted" in South Carolina, he was a fugitive from justice, and the accidents of war might readily bring him in touch with some one in the Southern Army who knew his record.

Shane got along well with the Mexicans for the simple reason that he liked them. He soon found that a "Greaser" is a venomous and ugly foe to the white man who despises him, a courteous and gentle friend to the white man who seeks his friendship. The boy had gone to visit Paulo Varez, soon after the fight on Grinning Juniper Slope.

Rather to his surprise, he found himself in a rambling square of adobe buildings, with a small courtyard in the center, filled with flowers. The rooms of Paulo's house were not

ill furnished, but betokened a refinement of taste far greater than that of Kit Carson's house, though the latter was considered unusual for New Mexico at that time.

The Mexican cowboy was hospitable, but reticent, and the boy saw none of the family. Paulo, in his home, was a different being from Paulo, the cow-hand and roper. The boy felt a queer sense of being in touch, not with an inferior, but with a superior, civilization to that of the ranch. Casually, he learned that Paulo was devoted to music and a guitar-player of no mean merit.

Now Mrs. Carson had, at one time, tried to learn the guitar, and her husband, to humor her, had bought a great deal of music. A large and growing family—she had five children at this time—caused an abandonment of the guitar, and the music had lain on a dusty shelf for some years. When Kit Carson returned, therefore, Shane asked if he might buy this music, and Mrs. Carson, only too glad to get it out of the way, gave him the whole pile. Shane selected the pieces which looked the hardest—he chose the pages which looked most covered with notes, for he knew nothing about music—and, the fol-

lowing Sunday, rode down with these as a return token of hospitality.

Paulo, with a breeding inherited from Spanish ancestry, quietly accepted the gift, and, before Shane left, presented him to his wife and daughter. This was tantamount to a declaration of friendship.

Soon after Carson's return, "Smash" told him the whole story of the Grinning Juniper fight, and of his execution of "Run-'em-off" Steve. Together, the two men rode down to Santa Fé and saw the sheriff, who, after cogitation, took them over to the Federal Judge.

"I will hold you under your own recognizances for three months," decided the judge, "in case any complaint is laid against you by the dead man's relatives or friends. Then, of course, there'll have to be a trial. Otherwise, it seems to me that all you've done is to cheat the sheriff out of a job."

This matter settled, Carson, on the ride back, took up the matter of Paulo Varez, of which Shane had informed him, when he made his report on the boss' return. Now, he listened to "Smash's" account of the occurrence.

"Poor handling," said the old scout, curtly.

"You've generally got more sense, 'Smash.' If you'd handled the Greasers just right, that day, they'd have gone with you to Pit Canyon and headed off the cattle. 'Hard-Jaw' would have been alive to-day. You killed him, just as much as 'Run-'em-off' did."

"Smash" shrank at this home thrust.

"Don't say it, Kit!" he exclaimed.

"Why not, if it's true? If I were 'Hard-Jaw's' ghost, I'd haunt you!"

He knew the mountaineer's superstitious nature, and rode on in silence to let the thought sink in.

Presently he took up the subject again,

"You're foreman, and it's up to you to handle the men. Suppose I take Paulo back, what then?"

The wily old scout counted upon the humbling of the foreman's spirit by his reference to "Hard-Jaw's" ghost, and not without reason.

"I got no fault to find with his work," he answered.

Then Carson appealed to another of the big man's weaknesses.

"You aren't scared of him, are you?"

"Smash" almost leaped from his saddle.

"Scared o' that pinch o' snuff!" he exclaimed.

"I thought that was, maybe, why you didn't want him back," remarked Carson.

Whereupon, as he expected, "Smash" clamored to have the Mexican reëngaged, just to show that he had no fear of him.

The scout never even smiled, but turned the conversation to questions of stock and the condition of the range.

Next day Shane received orders to ride over to Paulo's house and tell him his "holiday" was over, and he could come back to work, the boss having endorsed the boy's action in keeping him on the pay-roll.

The Mexicans on the ranch thus looked to Shane as their ally and taught him all they knew. He picked up the Mexican-Spanish tongue quickly, and Paulo taught him every trick he knew with a rope.

In a few months Shane learned to throw a rope, with a fair degree of skill, though of course, he could never hope to rival even the poorest of the native cowboys. For this there was excellent reason. In the Southwest country, a Mexican boy begins to handle a rope as soon

as he can walk, and by the time he is three years old he has already begun to make life a burden to the hens, goats, pigs, and dogs of his vicinity. The roping feats of many a Mexican ten-year-old are extraordinary. And yet a tenderfoot wonders why he can't learn to throw a rope in a week or two!

Paulo could do extraordinary things with a rope. On a bet of fifty dollars for fifty throws, ten dollars deducted for every miss, he only missed once. On another occasion, blindfolded, he rode beside a running yearling and roped his hind-feet three times out of five by the sound of the hoof-falls alone.

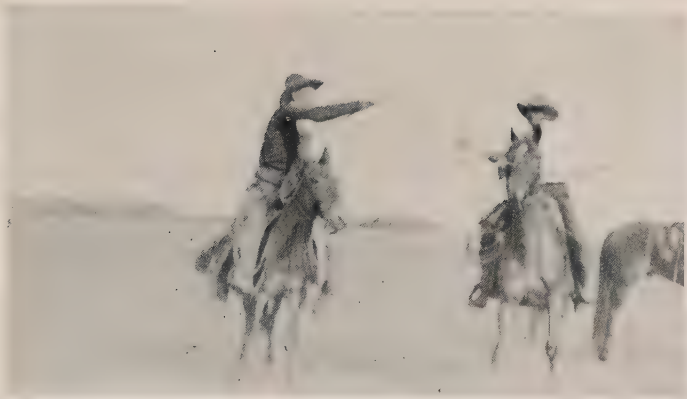
But there was a black goat which never failed to give sport. He was a wise old buck, and just as clever in calculating where a noose would drop as was the thrower. On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, "Sabe"—for so was the goat christened—succeeded in evading the ropes of every man in the bunch, one after the other, for nearly two hours, and the first rope to settle over his horns was that of Shane! It was pure luck, of course, but, as soon as the rope settled around his horns, "Sabe" stopped and looked round at the boy as much as to say:

"Think you're smart? You didn't know where it was going to drop, either!"

These sports grew few when at last New Mexico was invaded by a Confederate force of Texans under General Sibley, who defeated the Union forces at Valverde, on the Rio Grande, and occupied Albuquerque and Santa Fé. "Slide," "Cross-cut" and "Rabbit-foot," the three Texans remaining on the ranch, asked for their time and joined the troops in gray.

Colonel Canby, the commander of the Union forces, called on Kit Carson for aid, but, before any serious engagement occurred, Federal reinforcements arrived from Colorado, and Carson's men returned to their proper work of putting down the Apache, Ute and Navaho outbreaks which were cropping up sporadically from time to time. Shane was with Carson on several of these skirmishes, and, on one occasion, rode with the famous scout when he defeated and with less than 600 men captured practically the entire Navaho population of 7,500, all ready to go on the war-path.

It was but seldom that Shane went on these expeditions, however, for Carson could spare little time at the ranch and trusted Shane a great



THE RIGHT WAY TO THROW.



CAUGHT!



MANHANDLING, THE PONY KEEPING THE ROPE TAUT.

Photographs by the author.

ROPING.

deal, all the more because of the boy's friendship with the Mexicans, a friendship to which, shortly, the boy was to owe his life.

It was in the late spring of 1864. Three years on the ranch had taught Shane a good deal 'about handling cattle. Even "Smash" was grudgingly bound to admit that the boy was worth the wages of a first-class hand. This was not so much because he was a good rider or roper. Far from it. He was not in the same class as any of the "bronco-busters" of the neighborhood, when it came to riding; and, compared with the Mexicans, he was still a green-horn with a rope. But he had learned to handle cattle, and, as every ranchman knows, a cow-boy who can ride anything with four legs, rope an eccentric goat, and shoot the left eye of a desert kangaroo rat at a hundred paces is absolutely useless unless he has learned how to humor the ways of cows—the generic term for cattle.

No more serious misconception was ever made than that which was so common in eastern states during the cow-days of the West—that of supposing that if a man could ride a horse he could run a ranch. Hundreds of men were

ruined by that idiotic error, and thousands of men who went out west to become cowboys failed utterly and completely. An old-timer once told the author that he thought "he remembered more locoed mavericks in cow-towns than in mining camps." The tenderfoot was looked on with contempt, not because he was new to the work, but because in so arduous and dangerous a life, one weak man imperilled the entire outfit.

Shane was well out of the tenderfoot stage. He could handle himself on any pony—except a confirmed "outlaw"—he could rope well enough to get his own pony out of a string, or to help in branding calves, he could drive or trail cattle without stampeding them and without letting them get into poor condition.

Paulo and Shane chanced to be out together, heading back some cattle which had wandered northwards too close to the Taos Indian reservation. It was necessary to keep the cattle well away from that section, for the Taos Indians are pueblo-dwellers and agriculturists. Their fields are not fenced. A fair-sized herd of cattle, always hungry—since the sparse tufts of wiry grass which grow in the sage-brush plains

are poor pasture—would soon ruin the fields of growing corn. Aside from the fact that it would be costly to pay for the damage, it was unwise to stir up the hostility of the Taos Indians, especially at a time when the country was seething with war.

In spring, the arroyos of New Mexico are a very uncertain quantity. They may have little torrents rushing down them, after one of the infrequent rains, they may be as hard as a plank floor, they may be quicksands. In the section whither the cattle had wandered, toward the hot springs, quicksands were numerous, and Paulo had warned Shane. He did more. On one or two occasions he dismounted and led his pony across an arroyo which looked uncertain. Shane knew that when a Mexican gets off his horse, there must be an amazingly strong reason for it.

No trouble occurred, however. The cattle were found, grazing on the flats near Pot Creek, and were turned homeward without any trouble. Shane trailed the herd on the left rear, Paulo on the right. They were thus about a quarter of a mile apart.

As the herd went through one of these dubious

arroyos, several of the cattle commenced to sink. All struggled out to safety, save one, a long-horned steer. Seeing the animal's trouble, and knowing exactly what to do, Shane rode up within a few feet of the partly engulfed steer, threw the noose of his lariat over the horns, took a turn round the horn of his saddle and set his wise little cow-pony at a walk. As the rope tautened on the horns, helping to lift the steer, the animal recommenced to struggle, and after a few wild plunges, got out of the quicksand, and climbed up the bank, which was not more than three-and-a-half or four feet high.

Shane, who had no previous experience of this kind, waited to see the steer shake his head until the loosened noose fell off his horns, but, instead of that, the steer put his head down and charged straight at him. For a second Shane sat stunned, then put the spurs to his pony, who had seen the charging beast at the same time, and had broken into a run.

It was too late!

The impetus of the maddened steer carried him forward before the pony could get into his full gait, and a quick upturn of the cruel horns gored the pony's side. Shane had only just

time to swing his leg out of the stirrup when the shock came, and he was thrown clear by the terrific jolt.

He staggered to his feet, bewildered.

At the same moment, the steer saw him, and, with another vicious hook at the fallen pony, started after the boy.

Shane ran. Into his mind flashed pictures of bull-fighting that he had seen, and he figured, that, at a pinch, he could dodge the steer. The infuriated animal, however, came like an express train. Then, suddenly, a quick jerk on the steer's horns brought him rolling over on the ground like a shot jack-rabbit.

The pony had fallen on the coil of the lariat, which having already two turns around the horn of the saddle, entangled. The sudden pull of the pony's weight on his horns, running as he had with his head down, had overturned the steer.

The boy saw what had happened and realized that, since the lariat was not fastened to the saddle, one or two more such jerks would free it. He remembered Paulo. Drawing his six-shooter, he fired three times in the air.

The Mexican's pony pirouetted at the touch

of the reins and Paulo, seeing the steer rising and preparing to charge the boy again, grasped the danger instantly.

Spurs and quirt struck together.

The pony leaped into action.

At the same time, the steer had reached his second pull, and the slippery rope was beginning to give way.

He got it free and lunged forward again.

Paulo came charging down, and, when the steer was within a few feet of Shane, the rope which never missed came whistling through the air, with a little upward twist, landing on the ground on the very spot where, a fraction of a second later, the two hind hoofs of the steer descended. A jerk of the wrist, a quick turn around the horn of the saddle, and Zip! down went the angry steer.

The Mexican made fast the rope, knowing that he could trust his pony to keep it taut; dismounted in leisurely fashion and strolled over to Shane. With his thumb he made the motion of a horn going into the boy's chest, and commented,

"Good thing I not miss that time!"

"I shouldn't be here if you had," replied

Shane. He tried to look unconcerned, but he was feeling fairly shaky.

"You don't want be bull-fighter?" queried his friend, with a smile.

"Not much!" answered Shane emphatically. "This is my first time, and I hope it'll be my last."

"Chapps bad," the vaquero continued, pointing to the heavy sheepskin chapparejos Shane was wearing, and which prevented any active running, "if you want to dodge steer, got to jump quick."

"Could you have dodged him, Paulo?"

"Not want to try," was the calm answer. "Me, I'd put a bullet through his head."

"I never thought of it!" cried Shane.

"Better think, next time. One of those horns in your belly, you feel very sick."

He sauntered over to the gored horse, took one look at him, and, drawing his revolver, put a bullet through the pony's head.

"No use to let suffer," he said crisply. Then, turning to the boy, he added,

"You be pony now. Carry saddle."

"Crickey!" exclaimed Shane, "I hadn't thought of that. How'll I get home?"

"Walk," answered the Mexican. "Or, if you like, I help you saddle steer!"

He pointed to the vicious animal, which was lying in a twisted position on the ground, the rope around his hind legs held taut by the faithful pony.

"Thanks, no," declared Shane emphatically. "I've had enough of that beast."

"Better hide saddle an' walk," was the advice. "You can come get saddle to-morrow with spare pony."

"How far is it?"

"Twenty, twenty-five miles!" with a characteristic shrug.

"And it's noon already! Paulo, I'm going to be hungry when I get back."

"Sure. Eat sage-brush," was the comforting reply.

Then, and only then, did Shane remember that the Mexican had saved his life.

"I haven't thanked you, Paulo," he began, "and—"

The Mexican waved the thanks aside.

"Good thing I didn't miss that time," he repeated, and sauntered over towards the steer, to see just how the noose lay. "You better get

the other side of the arroyo," he advised, "unless you want little more bull-fighting."

"No, thanks!"

And Shane scrambled across the dry bed of the narrow stream to watch how Paulo intended to handle the release of the steer.

The Mexican walked to his pony, unfastened the lariat and, still holding it taut, came hand over hand up to the steer, the pony following. Then, with a deft, quick movement, he released the noose, coiled the rope and sprang into the saddle.

The steer got to its feet, half-stunned, but still angry.

Paulo wheeled beside him, and, drawing his gun, fired right beside its ear.

Up went the steer's tail and off he started. A few leaps on, he tried to turn, but another shot flashed past his head, the flame near enough to sear the hair, and the frightened animal, without another sign of viciousness, galloped off to join the herd.

Paulo cantered quietly to the other side of the herd, to keep the cattle together, a difficult task, single-handed.

Shane, after having hidden the saddle among

some big boulders that were sticking up, about half a mile away, set himself to trudge the weary miles to the home ranch. Well he knew, as he went, that the skill of a Mexican roper had saved him from death.

CHAPTER XII

THE OLD COW TRAIL

WITH the close of the Civil War and the commencement of that period of disorder which, in the Southern States, was known as the "carpet-bagging" period, conditions in New Mexico turned for the worse. Men who had served in both armies, who had lost the taste for peaceful occupation, and who found that their lawless ways would not be tolerated in settled communities, drifted to the West and Southwest. Many of these became the "bad men" of the following decade.

It is to be remembered that the "bad man" of cowboy times was very seldom a cowboy himself. In the late fifties and early sixties, he was generally a hunter or trapper forced out of his pursuits by the encroachments of civilization, in the late sixties and early seventies he was often an ex-guerilla who had learned to live by plunder, in the late seventies and early

eighties he was usually a fugitive from justice who had heard of the "wild and woolly" doings of the cow country.

The War, too, had a marked effect on Kit Carson. The old scout, always more of a fighter, explorer and Indian expert than a rancher or farmer, began to pay less and less attention to his ranch on the Rio Grande. Carson had been brevetted Brigadier-General and was stationed at Fort Garland. He had tamed the Navaho, but the Ute were giving trouble, and the great outbreak of the Apache under Cochise was brewing.

During the war, there had been a market for the ranch cattle as beef for Kit Carson's battalion of volunteers, and there was a market at Fort Garland, but the continued absence of the "boss" had a deteriorating effect on the Cross-Double-Circle.

An equally severe blow was the sudden defection and departure of "Smash." The foreman, one day, irritated by some quarrel with the Mexicans, came to Shane and told him that he was going to dismiss every Greaser on the place, and, now that the war was over, hire "white men." When Shane tried to reason with him,

he declared that the boy was a traitor to his color and stunned him with a single blow of his huge fist. When Shane recovered consciousness, the strong-box was gone.

Luckily, the loss in money was not serious. Shane, who had long felt that the strong-box was a temptation to any of the desperate characters of the region, had buried all the bills of large size in a wide-mouthed glass jar at the foot of a big piñon tree.

He wrote a long letter to Kit Carson, explaining the whole occurrence, and, months after, received a reply to the effect that he had been in the wrong and "Smash" in the right, inasmuch as the time had come to increase the number of whites in New Mexico, as the Mexicans were trying to get the upper hand in territorial politics.

Shane smarted under this letter, and would have been glad to quit the Cross-Double-Circle himself, but he realized that, as long as Kit Carson was engaged in keeping the peace of the Southwest against Indian outbreaks, he could not desert him. So, much against his will, he stayed at the ranch, appointing himself foreman in "Smash's" stead. Young though he

was, he knew that Mexicans would obey him better than they would one of their number. He gave foreman's pay to Paulo, however, and the vaquero took practical charge.

As the early history of the cattle industry in the Spanish-speaking sections of the Southwest so often showed, an all-Mexican ranch did not succeed. "Greasers" will work under either American or Spanish command, but lacking that authority, the ineradicable fault of putting everything off until "to-morrow" becomes fixed. Then, in the year 1867, there was a bad drought in New Mexico, calling for constant activity among the hands, which the leisure-loving Mexicans would not give.

In the spring of 1868, which began badly, with the herds seriously depleted, Mrs. Carson suddenly died, leaving seven children, the youngest only a few weeks old. Carson was in Washington, at the time, accompanying a party of Ute with a grievance, and was a sick man himself. He survived his wife only a month, dying in Colorado, and the Cross-Double-Circle ranch was sold for what it could fetch and turned over to the executors for the children. The new owner, however, arranged to keep all hands on,

for one year, at the same wages. Shane disliked the new boss intensely, and, on the very day the year expired, asked for his time.

Shane was out of a job. His first desire was to go back to Leavenworth to see his mother, who now had become principal of the high school in that growing town. He had not been able to go during the war, nor since the war, as he had not been able to leave the ranch because of Kit Carson's absence. But, the more he thought of it, the less it seemed to him that he would find anything to do in Kansas. For nearly seven years he had been cowboy and ranchman and he knew that, while a few cattle were on the Kansas prairies, the industry was noways organized as it was in Texas. He must sell his knowledge in the best and nearest market. He must go to Texas.

A ride over the hills to Las Vegas confirmed him in this conclusion. The ranchers in the Pecos Valley were in a discontented and unhappy mood because of the drought of the previous year. They were willing enough to sell out to Shane, even offering to take his word for future payment, but the boy was quite shrewd enough to see that if the

ranchers were so willing to sell, it meant that the ranches could not be worth buying. He had five hundred dollars in his belt, the pony he was riding and a spare pony, and a pack-horse, besides. With this outfit, he felt, he could go round the world, if necessary.

Just as the western side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where he had lived for many years, is one of the main sources of the Rio Grande, so the western sides of the mountains above the high plateau where Las Vegas is situated are the headwaters of the Rio Mora and the Conchas, the sources of the Canadian River. It is that long and rambling stream which waters the Panhandle of Texas and the central part of Oklahoma, before joining the Arkansas River and thence forming a part of Mississippi, Father of Waters.

“Over unknown country, follow a river.” This old rule, as old as the first migrations of animals before Man was on the Earth, is a good rule still. Where there is water there will be herbage, where there is herbage, there will be game. Shane struck west from Las Vegas for Rio Moro and the Canadian River. But he did not go alone. At Las Vegas he had picked up a

Texan cowboy, "Dice" Harry, who was tired of the Pecos country and who wanted to get back to the Lone Star State. As "Dice" knew a good deal about the ranches in the Panhandle, Shane was glad to have him for a partner, and the Texan was glad of company. While not a section infested with "road-agents," the roving Apache haunted it, and two guns were better than one, in case of trouble.

Once past the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains, and in Texas, ranches became less scattered. Few of the outfits were full and were eager to hire the two cowboys. But, on "Dice's" counsel, Shane refused, for the Texas hand told him that outfits and pay were better a little farther away from the New Mexico line.

One afternoon, as they were passing an old prehistoric ruin, not far from the place now called Adobe Walls, they overtook a herd of some six hundred head of the Lazy S brand on the trail. The trail boss at once offered thirty dollars a month to the two punchers.

"Dice" refused the offer promptly. He had no use for driving trail, he said; he wanted to get with a big outfit, "where," as he phrased it, "there would be some buckaroo doin's."

“Where are you headed?” asked Shane, when the offer was repeated directly to him, being raised to forty a month, since he had three horses with him.

“Abilene, Kansas,” was the reply. “We’re goin’ to join a big bunch on the North Trail.” He referred to the trail known to history as the Old Cow Trail or the Old Chisholm Trail.

Shane reflected. Here was work, right away, a chance to see new country, and best of all, an opportunity to get within reach of his mother, without losing a couple of months of time.

“How long do you reckon to stay in Abilene?”

“Me, only a few days, maybe a week. Then I’ve got to trail a couple o’ hundred head on to Ellsworth.”

“How far is that?”

“Three days, if we get ’em thar in fair condition.”

Shane thought to himself. This meant that at least two weeks, probably three, would elapse before the trail boss would be returning through Abilene. He knew that this new cow town was not far from Fort Riley, which in turn was two easy days’ ride from Leavenworth. He could

leave the outfit at Abilene, ride to Leavenworth to see his mother, leave her a fair-sized sum of money, stay a few days, and get back to Abilene before the outfit started on the back trail.

"All right," said he, "I'll go."

"What's yo' name?" asked the trail boss.

"Shane Ryder," the boy answered.

"Any handle?"

This referred to nicknames, which were general at that time, all through the Southwest.

"Most folks call me 'Shane,' " he answered, "though some of the boys used to call me 'Inky' because I kept the books for Kit Carson on his ranch."

The news evidently excited the interest of the trail boss.

"Yo' did, for sho'?" he queried.

"Nearly seven years."

"Fifty a month," was the satisfied answer, "an' you do all the tallyin'."

At which Shane smiled, but remembered Carson's saying that while riders and good shots could always be found, out on the plains a little business training was rare.

"Just where is the North Trail?" queried

Shane. "I used to hang around Fort Leavenworth and knew most of the hunters and trappers, but I never heard of that trail."

"How long since yo' was thar?" queried the trail boss, who had introduced himself as "Clip" Shope.

"Eight or nine years."

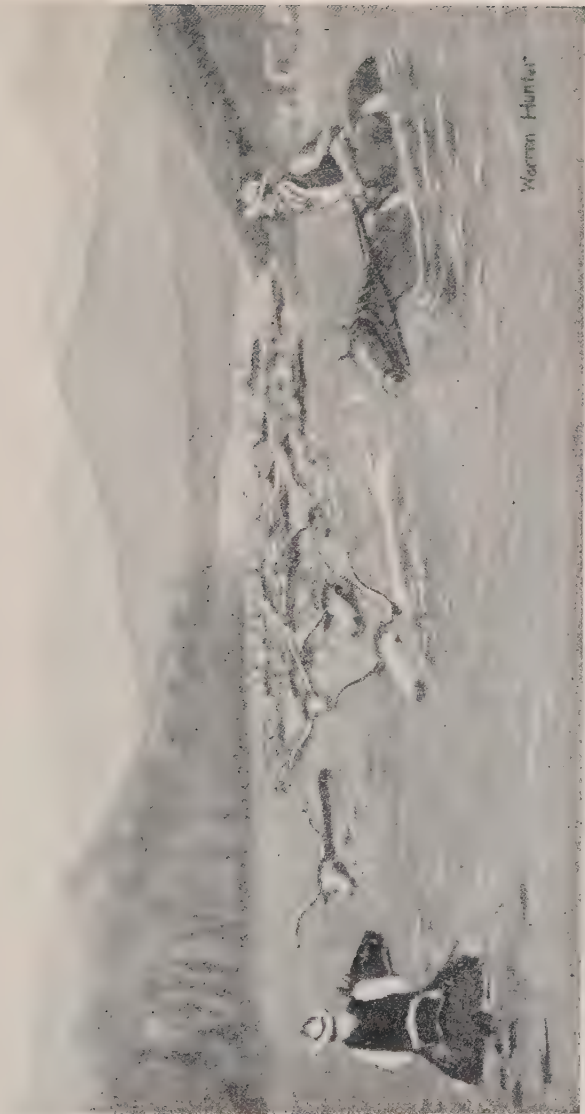
"Thar warn't any trail, then. Some folks call it the Chisholm trail, now. It starts at San Antonio, Texas, an' runs cl'ar through the Nation (Indian Territory) to Abilene, Kansas."

"Why Abilene?" queried Shane. "It isn't any bigger than a wide place on the trail, is it?"

"Shipping point on the new railroad," "Clip" explained. "'Tain't a town, but I reckon it'll soon be one."

"What way does the trail run?" asked Shane, repeating his query.

"I dunno much about the trail to the south," answered "Clip," "but I heern tell it crosses the San Marcos River, four miles below San Marcos; crosses the Colorado, three miles below Austin; then up by Georgetown, Salado, Belton, Fort Graham, an' crosses the Brazos River near Cleburne. Then it goes up by Hell's Half-Acre



Courtesy of the Old Trail Drivers' Association.

SWIMMING THE NORTH PLATTE RIVER.

A dangerous spot on the Old Chisholm Cow Trail. Illustration from a painting by Warren Hunter.

an' crosses the Trinity River, just below Fort Worth. Then up by St. Jo, crossin' the Red River at Red River Station, an' so on up through the Nation."

"But that's northeast," exclaimed Shane, "and you're making to the south a bit."

"I reckon on goin' down Elm Fork to Red River an' then east until I strike the trail. But when we get down here a bit, I'm goin' to break away to pick up a herd of 300 head of the X Arrow X an' take 'em up along o' this bunch. You can come down to the Brazos, tally 'em an' help me drive 'em."

"All right," the boy agreed.

Shane had learned to handle cattle, but this was the first time he had ever traveled with a herd of six hundred head, and he soon learned that trail driving had its own difficulties. The mossback stampeding bushwhacking type of the long-horns were tricky to handle, with just the usual amount of cow cussedness when feed and water were plenty, but skittish at night and ready to stampede whenever it was necessary to make a dry camp.

On the fifth night, while Shane was asleep, some other of the boys being on night guard, the

cattle broke away. It was a dark night and there was some lively language before Shane and the rest who were asleep could catch and saddle their ponies. There was no difficulty in locating the herd, it had split into three bunches, and each one of them, as it tore along, made a rolling noise like distant thunder. By sun-up, they had run themselves out, but Shane had stayed with one part of the herd, and found himself, with one other cowboy, driving the tired animals back to where they started from. As it happened, not a beast was lost, but it cost a day's time.

A few days later, the trail boss, with Shane and two other men, struck south for the Brazos, to pick up the X Arrow X herd. It was only a two days' easy ride. They took no spare ponies as the other outfit was sending a remuda (extra saddle-herd) and a horse-wrangler along, as well as two riders.

As the Lazy S herd, when Shane joined it, had already been road-branded, he escaped this work, but the X Arrow X herd had to go through the performance. Then it was that Shane was grateful to the Mexican roper, Paulo Varez, for in road-branding, big steers have to be roped

and thrown. A road-brand differs from a ranch brand in that it is necessary only to burn it into the hair sufficiently for it to last the three or four months of the drive up the trail. A ranch brand is burned well into the hide:

These cattle were in good condition, and without loss of time, they were headed toward St. Jo. Feed and water was good and six men were plenty to handle the herd. Remembering "Dice's" advice, Shane had insisted that, as tallyman, he could escape the always unpleasant job of tailing the herd (riding at the rear, in the dust, urging the lame and lazy cattle along). There was no chuck wagon along, as this bunch was going north with the Lazy S herd.

"I ran a small bunch up last year," explained "Clip" to Shane, "on my own, just like I'm doing this. But I reckon thar ain't a-goin' to be many more small herds. Some few fellows that's got the money are buyin' cattle, down at San Antonio, or Austin, or Fort Worth, an' goin' to handle 'em big. Maybe 2,000 to 3,000 in a bunch."

"Doesn't sound good to me," remarked Shane.

"Why not?"

"As big a herd as that, I'd think, would string out too far and graze too close. And watering would be hard, too."

The trail boss shook his head.

"It takes less men to handle one herd o' three thousand head, than three herds o' one thousand. And, take it any way you like, three thousand head is goin' to eat the same as three thousand head, three herds or one. As for waterin', 'tain't often we water except at a creek or river. No driver worth his chuck is goin' to drive a dry bunch near a spring an' have 'em trample each other to death. Trail-drivin' ain't like punchin', Shane. It's easier work, in a way, but it take a lot of savvy for the boss. An' it ain't all pie."

That this was true Shane was soon to find out.

The next day, while traveling along over the flat plain, Shane saw ahead what looked like a moving ridge of timber, but this resolved itself, in a few minutes, into a band of about four hundred Comanches. They were evidently on the war-path, but, as the trail boss explained hurriedly to Shane, it was not likely that the braves were out against the whites. They were probably on a foray against another tribe.

"Keep your hands off'n your guns, boys," he warned. "If any one shoots, we'll all lose our scalps."

The Comanche braves took no notice whatever of the trail boss or the rest of the cowboys, but quietly and methodically killed twenty-five of the beeves, and skinned them, right there, eating the flesh raw, with blood running down their faces. Accustomed to the very different habits of the Blackfeet, these Comanches looked to Shane like a lot of hungry dogs.

The trail boss, who knew a few words of Comanche, rode boldly up to the chief and asked pay for the damage that was being done. The war chief kept his eyes on the ground, never even looking up when addressed. This sign, the Indian's response when he refused to answer, was definite, and "Clip" rode back and told the boys to start up the herd.

Shane rode up to the lead to point the herd, but, as soon as the cowboys commenced to start the cattle, the Indians bunched in front of it, and held the herd back.

Having feasted, the Comanches wanted their fun, and they spent an hour in feats of horsemanship and in shooting arrows clear through

the beeves. They killed another thirty for pure sport. After this had gone on for a while, the War Chief gave an order. The young braves drew aside and rode on their way to battle with their enemies, at which—as Shane learned later—they were badly defeated and half their number killed.

Next day, as it chanced, the outfit met Colonel Miles, who had been appointed Indian agent for the Southern Cheyennes, Southern Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches. When “Clip” Shope told him of the occurrence, he made a note of the number of beeves killed and promised that the X Arrow X and Lazy S ranches would receive pay from Washington for all that had been lost.¹

As the herd drove north through Indian Territory, Shane began to understand that the Old Cow Trail was not a trail in any ordinary sense of the word. There were certain river crossings when it narrowed to a hundred yards wide, or even less. Its average width was about half a mile, and, in places, the actual trail itself was fully two miles across.

¹ An actual occurrence, happening to L. D. Taylor of San Antonio, who took a herd of 1,000 up the trail in this year, 1869.

At Pond Creek the outfit ran across their first buffalo, and, for a while, there was lively sport. The boys were wasting their shells trying to kill the buffalo in the head, as cattle are shot, but Shane, who had been with the buffalo hunters a good deal, showed his trail-mates how buffalo could be killed every time by a shot behind the shoulder.

One of the boys then roped a young buffalo, for the sport of it, but, so sudden and vicious were the charges of the beast, that the puncher was glad enough to let the beast get away, even at the loss of a good hair rope.

The Canadian River was swollen to a rushing torrent with good-sized trees floating down it, and there was nothing for it but to swim the beeves. This was a new task to Shane, for he was but a poor swimmer, having been brought up in the trapping country and, naturally, not having had any opportunity in New Mexico. But, seeing the other cowboys holding themselves up out of the water by one hand on the horn of the saddle, he followed suit, and got across in the same way.

Half way across, the herd broke in half and the leaders of the rear bunch got to milling in a

circle. They started to drift down stream, and "Clip" and two of the boys stripped and swam beside the herd, splashing water in the faces of the steers to separate them. One of the cowboys, too daring, got caught in the center of the milling herd and, to save himself from being jammed to death, he crawled up on the animals' backs, working his way from back to back until the edge of the herd was reached.¹

The outfit was keeping rigidly to the Chisholm trail, as it had been marked out by Col. Chisholm two years before. From Red River Station it struck north along Beaver Creek, Stage Station, hence to the head of Rush Creek and so to the Little Washita, crossing the Washita at Line Creek and following that until the low divide of the Canadian River, thence across to the North Fork, then, by way of Prairie Spring, Kingfisher Creek, Red Fork, Turkey Creek, Hackberry Creek and Shawnee Creek to Salt Fork, then by way of Pond Creek, Pole-Cat Creek, and Bluff Creek to Caldwell, just on the other side of the Kansas Line. On this three-hundred-mile stretch there was neither town,

¹ This happened to Chas. A. Siringo, with a herd of 3,500 head, in 1877.

village or settlement, except for Indian encampments. In Kansas, conditions were more settled and the route grew easier. It ran along the line of the Kansas River to Slate Creek, thence to the Nipisiqua River, along Cow Skin Creek to the Arkansas River and all along that to the head of Sand Creek and so through Brookline and Solomon to Abilene.¹

By 1877 the country around Abilene became too settled for it to be possible to bed the enormous herds that were coming up the trail, and Dodge City, further west, became famous as the most wide-open cow town on earth. By 1882 the Dodge City section became settled and the drives were diverted westward as far as Coolidge.

The herd was making good time, averaging about eleven miles a day, and it took Shane just fifty-four days from St. Jo to Abilene. The time usually given for the whole trip from San Antonio to Abilene varied from sixty to ninety days.

A short distance this side of Abilene the herd was held for shipment. There, since he was

¹ The reader is advised to mark this on a map, as the Old Trail Drivers Association of Texas, in the year 1917, officially approved this as the authentic line of the Old Cow Trail.

paying off the men, Shane asked for his time, telling the trail boss of his intention to ride to Leavenworth and see his mother, after which, perhaps, he would come back down the trail again.

The foreman gave him his money, saying,

“Don’t yo’ do no lingerin’ at Albilene, for it’s a tough town and they’ll find some way to throw an’ hog-tie yo’ roll! If yo’ do get into trouble, go an’ see ‘Wild Bill’ Hickock.”

“Wild Bill!” exclaimed Shane, “is he there?”

“He’s thar, hide, hair, hoofs, an’ horns, mainly horns. He’s marshal, and I tell you, even ‘Wild Bill’ has his hands movin’ like a locoed heifer’s legs keepin’ somethin’ like order.”

“He’s an old pal of mine,” declared Shane, and told the story of the tramp over the prairies with Billy Cody and “Wild Bill” after having been released from the Danites.

“Yo’ won’t get into no trouble then, with ‘Wild Bill,’ ” “Clip” agreed, “leastways, if yo’ do, something’ll happen to yo’ so sudden yo’ never know what hit yo’. There’s a corral-full o’ square folk in Abilene, too. I ain’t no hand to preach, cause I get to raisin’ the dust just as

quick as the next one when I've done some throat-washin', but I'm just tellin' yo' to keep away from monty and dance-halls an' don't take ary a drink unless yo're with friends."

So, with money in his pocket and a light heart, Shane rode into Abilene, at that time the roughest town in the cattle country.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NAMING OF BUFFALO BILL

ACTING on the advice of the trail boss, the first thing Shane did on his arrival in Abilene was to hunt up "Wild Bill" Hickock. He found him in the marshal's office, staring disconsolately at some letters which needed answering. "Wild Bill" knew how to read and write, but he had no love for it. As he expressed himself,

"I'd sooner pick up a thirteen-rattler'n a pen!"

He did not recognize Shane at first, for the ten years that had passed since Shane and he had walked over the prairies after having been cut loose by the Danites, had turned a husky boy into a powerfully built young fellow. When, however, he did know, there was no doubt of the boy's welcome, followed by the hospitable offer:

"Come an' lick'er up!"

Shane was not a teetotaller, the breed did not

exist on the Old Cow Trail, and he knew that, with "Wild Bill" along, he need not have any fear of the "knock-out drops" which were the bane of cowboys when striking a town. When the stories are told of the chappys-wearers getting into a frontier town and, before morning, having drunk or gambled away a summer's earnings, it is to be remembered that less of this is to be ascribed to cowboy foolishness, than to crooked work on the part of saloon-keepers and their gangs. The cowboy was always extravagant, but that is a long way from saying that he was always a fool.

Feeling quite at his ease in "Wild Bill's" company, Shane visited several saloons and met any number of the giant marshal's friends. But he held himself well in hand, and, when he thought hospitality had been duly received and returned, the boy ingeniously brought back to "Wild Bill's" memory, the unanswered letters lying on his table.

"If you like, Bill," he suggested, "I'll go back with you and write those. It'll be a whole lot less trouble for me than for you."

"Wild Bill" slapped him on the back with a blow heavy enough to stagger a steer.

“Do that for me,” he said, “an’ ye can run the town to-night!”

Shane disclaimed any desire to undertake to paint Abilene a rich ruby red and, on this plea of work, managed to edge the marshal away from the crowd.

The letters took but a short while, and then the boy told “Wild Bill” he planned to make tracks for Leavenworth to see his mother. The marshal, with many picturesque expressions, approved this plan, and could not be dissuaded from swaggering into the nearest “store” and buying the most costly and most gaudy neckerchief he could find, “jest for remembrance” as he put it.

“Sage hens,” he remarked, using the trail lingo for women in general, “are just plumb locoed on colors!”

After which he gave Shane some shrewd advice about the settlements between Abilene and Leavenworth, for the boy preferred to ride in than to take the train, although the line ran through. It was noon before the “lickering up” and the letters were done, and “Wild Bill” insisted on having his old comrade take chuck at the hotel.

“Heard anything recently of Billy Cody?” queried Shane when they sat down.

“He ain’t Billy Cody no more,” answered “Wild Bill,” “he’s been branded ‘Buffalo Bill’ now. Ain’t ye heard about the big buffalo-runnin’?”

“Not a word,” answered the boy. “I’ve been clear out of buffalo country for all these years.”

“The whole durn prairie is goin’ to be short on buffalo soon,” he answered, “the way hunters are pottin’ ’em off for the railroad. An’ that’s whatever! Well, I was layin’ to tell ye about that buffalo-runnin’.

“Ye mind Cody was some hunter. Well, when the Kansas Pacific started a-buildin’ out this way, Goddard Brothers, a firm what had the contract for pervidin’ chuck for the men, got hold o’ Cody an’ said if he wanted to take the job o’ killin’ buffalo enough to feed twelve hundred hungry men, three times a day, he could have it. Cody never laid down on nothin’ an’ took the job. More’n one good buffalo-hunter had turned the job down, seein’ the Indians were permiscuous and skittlesome. It was up to Cody to get twelve buffalo a day,

as the contractors needed twenty-four hams and twelve humps. That was all they ate, coyotes got the rest. That was last year. When I saw him the other day, he told me he had killed 4,280 buffaloes with his own hand, an' had ridden the same horse, mighty near all the time. That's why he got the handle o' 'Buffalo Bill.' "

"It was a good brand," agreed Shane.

"Ye're shootin'!" affirmed the marshal. "But he had to hopple that title, because thar was another 'Buffalo Bill' who reckoned he could ride rings aroun' Cody when it came to shootin' buffalo. This cuss was called Billy, too, Billy Comstock. He was six feet o' good stuff, was Comstock, an old-timer, scout, guide, hunter, an' all the cards o' the deck on Indian lingo. He could say 'How!' in forty redskin languages, I reckon.

"Comstock was chief o' scouts at Fort Wallace, an' he knew buffalo from hoofs to tail. The officers at the Fort jest naturally thought that Comstock could about carpet a bottom with buffalo while Cody was gettin' one or two. Cody's money came up as quick as I can pull a gun."

This was no small praise, for "Wild Bill's"

agility with a six-shooter had been proved many and many a time. The proof usually was a grave.

“Money did a heap o’ quick talkin’ right then an’ thar’. The lay-out was that the match was to be one day’s shootin’, eight hours, beginnin’ at eight o’clock of a morning. Comstock an’ Cody each put up five hundred dollars, an’ side bets were as plenty as drinks in a saloon on a fat night.

“The shootin’ come off about twenty miles east o’ Sheridan. A big crowd went out to see the fun. I had to stick on the job, but I heard all about it. It was the palaver o’ the country for a while.

“First sight, it looked like Comstock was goin’ to have the lead. He had a Henry rifle, which would fire a durn sight quicker than Cody’s ‘Lucretia Borgia’ as he called it, which was nothin’ but a needle-gun, a breech-loadin’ Springfield, .50 caliber. Them old guns, though, carried a killin’ weight o’ lead.

“Same thing, so the boys said who saw it, about the horses. Comstock had a fine-lookin’ big horse. Cody was ridin’ that raw-bone ‘Brigham’ o’ his’n, I reckon the best-known buf-

falo horse in the west. He used to ride him bareback an' without a bridle. Cody used to say that if only the ol' horse knew how to fire a gun, he wouldn't have to go along himself at all.

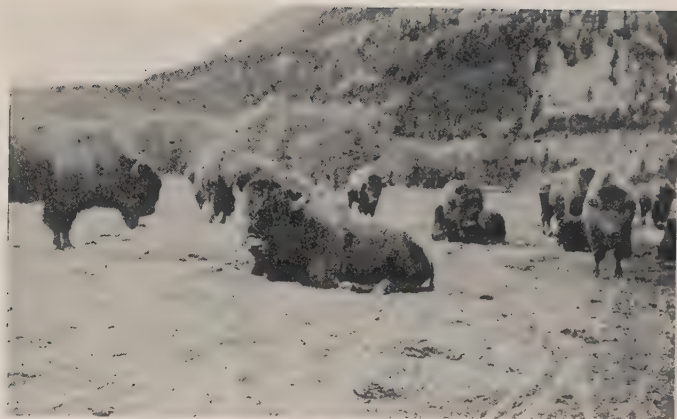
"It wasn't so long afore a good-sized herd o' buffalo was sighted. Two referees were followin' Cody and Comstock to keep tally how many each killed. They gin the word to go, an' at that, Cody pulled the bridle off'n his horse an' the ol' white sinner jest streaked.

"The buffalo got a-goin' along pretty good, to, an' separated into two bunches. Comstock could ride an' could shoot an' there weren't no cobwebs growing atween his horse's hoofs. He started shootin' from the rear o' his bunch, an' in three miles he had dropped twenty-three."

"Fast going!" cried Shane.

"Takes a whole lot of a man to do it," "Wild Bill" agreed. "But Cody, he reckoned on usin' his head. His game was to ride to the head of a herd an' pot off the leaders, pressin' 'em steady right along, an' scarin' the liver out of 'em with each shot. See, Shane, that-a-way they get to circlin'.

"Cody he winked at Brigham, an' they do say that Brigham winked back. Ye'd ha' thought



BUFFALO FROM THE PIEGAN COUNTRY.

Remnant of the herd which Shane chased. These animals are the descendants of a few buffalo calves which Walking Coyote, a Pend d'Oreille Indian, sold to the Canadian government.

the ol' horse had a bet on, himself. He'd slide up aside the buffalo, just the right place for a shot, ease down until the 'crack' come, an' hell-to-leather on to the next leader. They broke just right an' Cody had 'em circlin' beautiful. He dropped thirty-eight, all in a ring."

"Pretty shooting!" cried Shane, enthusiastically.

"Then a small herd o' cows an' calves was spotted. This time there was to be no manoeuvrin' but a straight charge to see who could drop 'em quickest. Owin' to the difference in guns, Comstock had a big advantage thar, but, at that, Cody got eighteen to Comstock's fourteen.

"Then he began to get gay, did Cody, seein' he had a good holt o' Comstock's five hundred, an', in the afternoon, he amused himself drivin' buffalo right up to whar the spectators were a-waitin', an' droppin' them when the girls began to scream. He dropped one, jest forty yards away from a wagon-load.

"Well, there wasn't nothin' to the contest, with Cody pickin' 'em off like that. The referees decided prompt an' sudden. Cody had killed sixty-nine buffalo as against Comstock's

forty-six, an' in addition, had jest amused hisself in the afternoon playing fancy for the crowd. Comstock paid over his losin's right thar an' then, and Cody was declared the official holder o' the title 'Buffalo Bill' an' the champion buffalo-hunter o' the Plains."

"You ever do much buffalo-hunting, Bill?" queried Shane.

"I saw some o' the fun here last year," answered the marshal, "when catchin' buffalo bulls alive was the sport o' the town."

"Tell me about it!" asked the boy, eagerly.

"It was this-a-way," explained Wild Bill, who, during his marshalship of Abilene, had become well informed on the cattle business, which was the mainstay of the town. "Like you know, 'most all the Texans was rebels"—Hickock had been a scout with the Union Army—"an' we gave 'em a-plenty to do. When we didn't keep 'em busy, the Injuns did. Thar wasn't nothin' what wore pants in Texas what wasn't busy, chasin' or bein' chased.

"Now, afore the Civil War, so the boys tell me who come up here last year, they used to run things quite different from now. There was miles an' miles o' open range, free enough an'

just covered with wild mustang horses, but thar warn't so many herd o' cattle. It was a bit too wild an' tricky. Out in West Texas a rancher reckoned on havin' an Indian raid every moon, not scalpin'-parties, ye savvy, but jest stealin'-parties, like. Thar was market enough for the few beeves raised, Shreveport (La.) and New Orleans bein' the buyin' points. Shreveport lost out 'cause the buffalo flies was so awful, they drove the cattle crazy.

“With most every man who could post himself across a mustang off at the war, there was mighty little shippin' and the herds begun to get big. Then, for another thing, Kit Carson snaked the Navaho onto a reservation, an' begun to pound sense into the heads of the Ute. That stopped Injun raidin' a whole lot.

“Then you know Texans! To hear 'em talk, the rest o' the United States ain't more'n a tail to Texas, the Lone Star State is the dog. They did a lot o' that talkin' in the rebel army, shootin' off their mouths about grass six feet high, an' good water, an' free range, an' whatever, so Southerners got the idee that Texas was a sort o' Promised Land game. Then the plantations had gone to thunder an' cuttin' out slav-

ery made it a heap worse. Hundreds o' plantation-owners took their stock west. They jest poured in, an' by about two years ago, Texas got so full o' cattle that the folks down there were gettin' ready to give 'em away. The East wanted cattle, an' wanted 'em bad, but thar wasn't nary a railroad in Western Texas—isn't yet.

"Now, durin' the war, a Cherokee half-breed, John Chisholm,¹ livin' in Indian Territory, had a contrac' to supply beef to Fort Scott, Kans. He ran cattle, too, to Fort Zarah, an' going west, army cattle went as fur as Fort Lyon and Fort Bend in Colorado.

"The year afore last, two small herds come up here, all the way from Texas, an' two herds, so I've heard, went to Baxter Springs. The market was right, but the trail was bad, a plenty worse than it is now, when the Injuns are gettin' used to it, an' the trail is sure enough known.

"Then a boy named Withers came up here. He was a trail-driver! When thirteen years old, he drove herd from Lockhart to Fredericksburg, Texas. When sixteen he drove a herd

¹Not to be confounded with John Chissam, who also sold cattle at this time and established the New Mexican trail.

from Lockhart to Shreveport, La., with a bunch of beeves for the Rebs, an' took back a bunch o' skeleton steers to the Brazos River to get some flesh on their bones. Then he started for 'way up here with a herd of 600 wild mossy-horns. He told me that a party of thirty Osage Indians came into camp an' began to help themselves to everything they saw, so they butchered a beef an' got away while the Indians were eatin'. It was good drivin', for that was the only hoof they lost on the trip. They sold 'em here for twenty-eight dollars, some better than the three dollars Confederate scrip for which they had sold in Shreveport.

"They got the best of it, because they got started early, but, pretty soon, herds begun comin' here, more'n we could handle. So, Joe McCoy—remember, I introduced you to him this mornin', a big Illinois buyer—told Withers he would pay him good money to rope a bunch o' husky buffalo bulls to send east for advertisin'. McCoy figured that if the Eastern buyers knew that there was a big public sale o' stock cattle at Abilene, every twice a month, it would help the boys an' boom the town.

"Withers, with Jake Carroll, Tom Johnson,

an' Billy Campbell, all Texans, and with two Spaniards who'd ha' roped a star or a comet if they were told to, started out for Fossil Creek Sidin'.

"The next mornin' after they struck the sidin', they saw seven buffalo bulls on the north side o' the Saline River. Thar, they wasn't no good to nobody. Ye can't tote a buffalo across a river on yer back. Five took the water, one got away an' the seventh charged Withers, who dropped him with his six-shooter.

"The five what behaved good were headed to the railroad, an' a couple o' hundred yards from the waitin' box car, the two Spaniards roped one bull an' Withers an' Campbell roped another. In a week or ten days, I misremember exactly how long, they'd roped twenty-four bulls. They didn't load 'em all, though. Out o' the twenty-four, ten died from heat an' rage an' two were too ugly to handle. They brought twelve of 'em here, and we shipped 'em on to Chicago.

"They made great advertising all along the way, an' when they got to Chicago, they turned 'em loose in a ring in the fair grounds while Withers and Cambell an' the two Spaniards showed the crowd just how the big brutes had

been roped. That made a great hit and a lot of Illinois cattlemen joined an excursion out to Abilene to see what the wild an' woolly West was like. They bought heavily last autumn an' I reckon that buffalo bull turn was just worth millions to Texas. Now, there are buyers here ready to take every animal that comes up the trail."

In this "Wild Bill" was right, for, as after years proved, the Chisholm trail saved Texas from threatened disaster. In the years 1866 and 1867 ruin stared western Texas in the face. The ranges were overstocked and there was no market. Cattle were worth from eight to ten dollars a head and no buyers.

As Geo. W. Saunders said, later, when talking over the Old Trail with Shane:

"Had these old-time trail-drivers not looked for and found this market, our vast herds would have died on the ranges and the vast unstocked ranges would have lain dormant and non-productive. Our ranchmen would have left Texas, disgusted, and broke, and it would have been a difficult matter to reinhabit our state, therefore development would have been checked for many years, possibly no iron horse would have reached

the Rio Grande up to this time, as the inducement would not have been attractive.

“No one knows what would have happened had the Northern Trail never existed, but it is plain that all commercial achievements, civilization, good government, Christianity, morality, our school system, the use of school and state lands making them revenue bearers, the expansion of the stock business from the Rio Grande to the British possessions, which is producing millions of dollars, the building of railroads, seaports, agricultural advancement, and everything else pertaining to prosperity can be traced directly to the achievements of the old time trail-drivers. The many good things accomplished by the untiring efforts of these old heroes can never be realized or told just as they were enacted, and it would be the father of all mistakes to let their daring and valuable efforts be forgotten and pass to unwritten history.”

That trodden stretch of prairie, seven hundred miles long, which ran from San Antonio to Abilene, and, later to Dodge City, was the direct means and cause of the comparatively sudden impetus of the Western States.

Often it has been asked where the cowboy

came from, and how the unique life of the open range became a part of the ineradicable heritage of every American boy. The answer is simple—the cowboy came from Texas, and his spurs of his knighthood were the old wheel spurs which drove the mustangs and the long-horns up the Old Cow Trail.

CHAPTER XIV

AN OLD-TIME COW TOWN

A FEW days' stay at Leavenworth with his mother was enough to convince Shane that "cow fever" was in his bones. Leavenworth had changed. Instead of the "mule-skinners" and the "bull-whackers," train officials directed the problems of transportation, and the locomotive covered in an hour what the "lightning bull team" had done in a day.

Gone, too, was the Pony Express, that heroic service of splendid endeavor, which, for reckless daring and sublime audacity, had never been approached in any other country and in no period of the world's history.

Gone were the hunters and the trappers, and the coon-skin cap was unknown on the streets. Gone were the Indian fighters, gone the gunmen. Ten years had made of Leavenworth a town, not a frontier post. Shane's mother, now in easy circumstances, honored and respected,

had taken deep root in the town, and she begged Shane to stay, but the lure of the long-horn was too strong.

He wanted to get back to the great sea of tossing horns, to the feel of the saddle, to the great, free open life of the trail, to the cow-boys singing "Bury me not on the lone prair-ee" or "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower," or "Longhorn Savvy" or "Sam Bass" or even the long "Hic-oo-oo" of the night herders keeping the restless cattle quiet. Home cooking had a big attraction, but the calf-ribs broiled before the camp-fire, the Dutch oven mess of loin, sweet-breads and heart, mixed with flour gravy, the coffee that tasted of tin, and the corn-meal biscuit, were good, too. The trail cook's call at earliest dawn, "Come an' git it!" seemed to awaken more appetite in Shane than a well-set breakfast table.

The following week found him back in Abilene, waiting for the trail boss, and, while idling, helping the shippers to load cattle into the cars. The persuader was a long stick with a sharp spike at the end with which the steer was prodded or punched. From this custom first arose the term cow-puncher, which later came

to be applied to cowboys in general, though, strictly, it was not applicable to the men who worked on the open range.

Few things show more clearly how utterly and completely the northwestern states were unoccupied, even by herds on the open range, than the fact that there was no market for cow ponies in Abilene in 1869, for there were no ranches in the Northwestern States at that time. This is easily to be understood, since, as yet, there were no shipping points, and the finest ranch in the world is useless unless there is available a market for the beef. One of the great values of the long-horn was that he furnished his own transportation.

Nor is it easy to realize how primitive were the lives of the first farmers, or "grangers," who settled what were then the Border States. No better picture can be given of those times than that told by Geo. W. Saunders, president of the Old Trail-Drivers Association, who took a thousand steers for the Choate & Bennett firm from the Cibolo River, Texas, to Abilene in 1870, being the first herd up the trail in that year. Speaking of the grangers, he says:

"The prairies near Abilene, Kansas, where

we held our herds; were partly taken up by grangers who lived in dug-outs, square holes in the ground or on the side of a bluff, with timbers placed across and covered with dirt. Each granger had taken up about 160 acres of land, part of which was cultivated. They had no fences, so to mark the boundaries of their homestead, they would plow a furrow around it.

“As there was no timber in the country, except a few cottonwoods which grew along the streams, the grangers were compelled to use buffalo chips (dry dung) for fuel. While we were there with our herds, many other herds came in and the prairie was covered with cattle for many miles around.

“I visited lots of camps and met many old friends from Texas. Buyers were plentiful, cattle sold fast, and the grangers were active among the herds, asking the cattlemen to bed cattle on their lands, so they could get the chips for fuel.

“One evening I noticed several men and women in buggies and buckboards going to different herds and begging each boss to bed his herd on their respective lands. They soon got into a squabble with each other, claiming they

had asked a certain boss first, and this caused the cowboys to congregate around to see the fun and encourage the row.

“Levi Anderson was the boss in question, and they all claimed he had promised to bed cattle on their land. Levi was puzzled, for he was not used to the custom of that country, and said the reason he had promised was because he thought they were all joking. He said those dug-out people were somewhat different from the folks where he lived, remarking:

“ ‘Down in Texas, if you gave a man dry dung, he would fight you, but, here in Kansas, they will fight you for dry dung.’

“The grangers figured that 1000 cattle would leave enough chips on the ground in one night to give them 500 pounds of fuel which would be dry in a few days.

“Ben Borroum and I were herding together one day, and as all the cattle were in sight we did not notice that they had gotten on a small patch of corn just coming up, until they had pawed and trampled all the corn, crushed twenty little chickens to death and run all the family into the dug-out. This negligence on our part cost Choate & Bennett about a hundred dollars.

“Jack Potter once told me that while he was up in that part of Kansas he got lost from his outfit one night and rode up to one of these dug-outs and asked if he could stop with them until morning. The granger told him he was very welcome to do so, although their accommodations were very limited.

“They fed his horse for him, and then invited him down into the dug-out, which contained one room about sixteen feet square, but as neat as could be. In this room there was a nice clean bed, one table, four chairs, a stove, cooking utensils, the man, his wife, and two small boys.

“The wife soon prepared a good supper for Jack, and after he had eaten, they sat up and talked to him for quite a little while, during which time the little boys fell asleep on the bed, while the parents, who seemed to be a very intelligent couple, told Jack about themselves and their plans. They were enthusiastic over the prospects to make a fortune in that new country, and talked about everything in general, but all this time Jack was puzzling his brain over how all of them were going to sleep on that one bed in that dug-out.

“Finally, the mother picked up the two boys

and sat them over in the corner, leaving them against the wall, still asleep, and then she informed Jack that he could occupy the bed, and she and her husband went up the steps.

"Potter turned in and was soon asleep and slept soundly all night long, but, when he awoke next morning, he found himself sitting in the corner with the two little boys, and the man and woman were occupying the bed. Jack told me he knew that couple were bound to prosper anywhere, even in Kansas.

"After breakfast he gave them five dollars, but they protested, saying that fifty cents was enough to pay for the poor accommodations he had received, but Jack informed them that what he had seen and learned right there was worth five dollars to him.

"I passed through this same old herding-ground, twenty-five years later, and I was astonished to see the changes that had taken place. Pretty farms and new dwellings covered the whole region, and there were fine herds of good cattle, horses, sheep, mules and hogs everywhere, and the whole country looked prosperous." ¹

¹ From "The Old Trail Drivers of Texas," published by the Old Trail Drivers Association.

As "Clip" had not yet got back from Ellsworth, Shane found himself compelled to hang around Abilene for a few days, and there he struck J. L. McCaleb, of Carrizo Springs, who had been one of the few young fellows who had driven a herd on the trail the year before. McCaleb was flush, but Shane soon saw that he was not as wild and woolly as some of the boys, and they palled together.

"I got enough to buy a drink or two," he commented, "but you'd hardly think that last year was the fust time I ever laid eyes on a five-dollar bill. F'll 'em up, again, barkeep! I'll tell you just how it come about.

"I was bringin' a herd up the trail for Mitchell & Dixon o' Hays county. We were holdin' our herd alongside of an old rail fence at Red River Station crossing, waitin' for a herd to cross.

"I was in front on the left, an' a good place compared to the boys further back where they had to ride back an' forth, as there was always a muley or a one-eyed steer leavin' the herd, and, farther back, especially the rear, where you had the lazy an' sore-footed cattle to keep movin'. The best place around a herd while on

the move—if you want to keep well posted in cuss words—is the tail.”

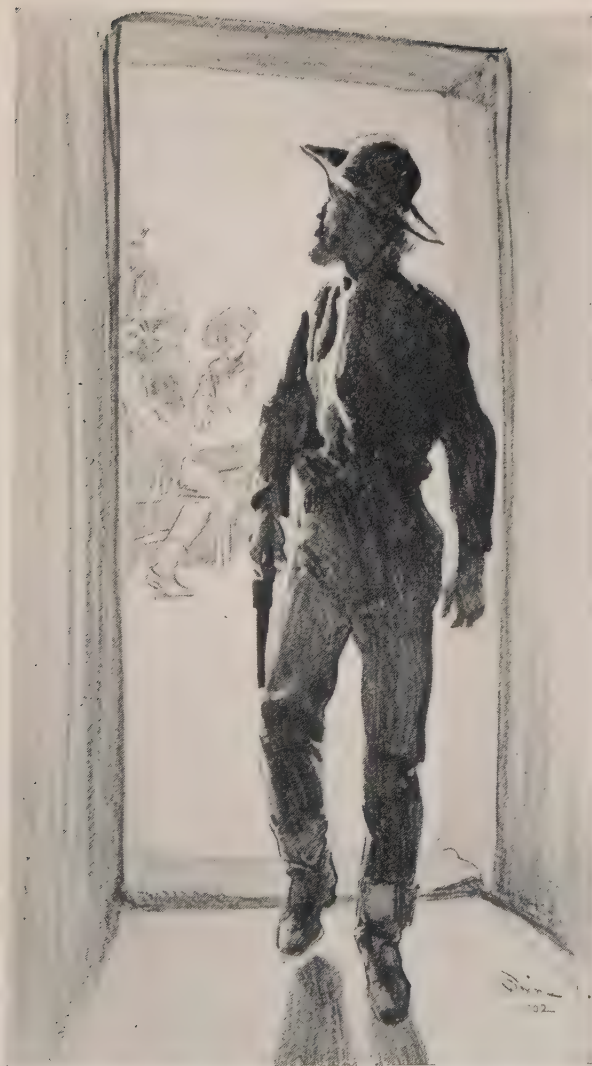
“I know it,” put in Shane, “I drove tail on the way up for a couple of days before I got the trail boss to see my place was on the point.”

“Ain’t it hair in the butter, though! We had old ‘Snorter’ ridin’ tail in our outfit, an’ I’m buyin’ chips to say that he could start a dictionary stutterin’. ‘Snorter’ could send shivers down a mossy-horn’s spine! But I was goin’ to tell you about that five dollars.

“While I was holdin’ the herd, by that fence, I saw a small piece o’ paper in a fence corner, an’ as the cattle seemed quiet, I got down an’ picked it up, jest because I was hungry for something to read, if not more than one or two words. Well, I read that it was good for five dollars.

“I hadn’t even seen one, afore, so after crossin’ our herd an’ when we struck camp for dinner, I showed it to the boss. He said that was sure-enough good money, so I rolled it up an’ stuck it away down in the pocket o’ my leather leggin’s. Money wa’n’t o’ no use on the trail, but I valued that five dollars a-plenty.

“One day while at dinner, the biscuit-shooter—he was a pure-bred black-face nigger—offered



THE MARSHAL!

When men of the Wild Bill Hickock type struck a town, the local "bad man" was apt to take a sudden trip to the cemetery.

to bet me a two-year-old heifer he had in the herd against my five dollars that he could beat me shootin', only one shot each. I was good with a pistol, but I knew the cook was hard to beat. But I didn't get nervous, as the two-year-old was about four to one if I won.

"One o' the boys got a little piece of board, took a coal out o' the camp fire, made a black spot about the size of a twenty-five-cent piece, stepped off fifteen yards and yelled,

" 'All ready. Shoot!'

"I was to shoot first.

"I jerked my old cap-and-ball Navy out, and, just about one second before I pulled the trigger, I saw the heads o' six husky Injuns just over a little rise in the ground, comin' toward the camp.

"This excited me so that I didn't hit the spot, only about one-half of my bullet touched the board just to the right o' the target.

"I yelled to the negro,

" 'Shoot quick! Look at the Injuns!'

"By that time we could see 'em plainly on top o' the rise. He fired, but never even touched the board. So six big Osage Indians saved me my valuable find—the five-dollar bill."

“What did you do with it,” queried Shane, raggingly, “buy a herd or two?”

“Me, do with it? I started to buy out the whole durn town o’ Abilene. Let me tell you.

“We bedded our cattle for the last time near Abilene, here, jest a couple o’ miles west o’ where your outfit bunched. The boss let me an’ another boy go to the town for one day.

“As it had been a long time since we had seen a house or a woman, they were good to look at. I wore a black plush hat which had a row of small stars around the brim, with buckskin strings to tie an’ hold on my head. An Injun with a parasol—I saw about forty braves, comin’ up the trail this summer, every durn one with a parasol—couldn’t ha’ been more tickled with himself than I was with that hat.

“We went into town, tied our ponies, an’ the first place we visited was a saloon an’ dance hall. We ordered toddies, like we had seen the older men do, an’ drank them down, for we was dry, very dry, as it had been a long ways between drinks.

“I quit my partner, as he had a girl to talk to, so I went out, and, in a very short time, I went into another saloon.

"I got another toddy, my hat began to stiffen up, but I pushed it up in front, moved my pistol to where it would be handy, then sat down on a box in the saloon, picked up a newspaper an' thought I would read a few lines, but my two toddies were at war, so I couldn't very well understand what I read. I got up an' left for more sights. Thar ain't so many here, but—"

"I've got Abilene sized up," interrupted Shane. "'Wild Bill's' an old trailmate of mine, and we made the rounds last night."

"It's fuller now than what it was then, an' a bit wilder maybe, but Abilene was the first town I'd struck like it, an' I was plumb set on seein' all there was to see. I walked around for maybe an hour.

"The two toddies were makin' me feel different to what I had felt for months, an' I thought it was gettin' to be about time for another, so I headed for a place across the street, where I could hear a fiddle. It was a saloon, gamblin' an' dance hall, 'Mac's' place. Likely you know it."

"I was there last night," admitted Shane. "They were whooping it up pretty hard."

"It was lively enough that time," agreed Mc-

Caleb, reminiscently. "Here I saw an old long-haired fellow dealin' monte. I went up to the bar an' called for a toddy, an', as I was drinkin' it, a girl came up—a nice-looker—an' put her little hand under my chin, looked me square in the face, an' said,

" 'Oh, you pretty Texas boy, give me a drink!'

"I asked her what she wanted, an' she said,

" 'Anything you are taking.'

"So I called for two more toddies.

"My, I was gettin' rich fast—pretty girl an' plenty o' whiskey. My old hat was now 'way at the back o' my head.

"My boss had given me four dollars' spendin'-money—reckon he thought I couldn't go fur on that—but I had my five-dollar bill.

"So I told the girl that she could make herself easy, that I was goin' to break the monte game, buy out the saloon, an' keep her to run it for me when I went back to Texas for my other herd o' cattle.

"Well, I went to the old long-haired dealer, an', as he was makin' a new lay-out, I put my five on the first card, a king, an', about the third pull, I won.

"Now, I had ten dollars, an' I thought I had

better go an' get another toddy afore I played again.

"As I was gettin' rich so fast, I put two bills on a trey, and won. Had now twenty dollars, so I moved my hat as far back as it would go, an' went to get a drink—another toddy.

"But the girl was gone. I wanted to show her that I wasn't jokin' about buyin' out the saloon after I broke the bank.

"After this drink, things didn't look so good. I went back, an' it seemed to me that I didn't care whether I broke the bank or not. You guess what's comin'? Sure enough. I lost every cent I'd won, an' the ol' five-dollar bill besides.

"When I quit that long-haired sharp, my hat was becomin' a bit more settled, gettin' down in front. I went out, found my partner an' left for camp.

"Next mornin', instead of ownin' a saloon an' goin' back to Texas after my other herds, I felt—Oh! What's the use!"

"I got cured of cards when I was a little shaver," declared Shane. "It was when I was at Fort Laramie. One of the old-time gambling sharps in the place had got religion and turned

straight. He was a daredevil, sure enough, and, being a little fellow, not weighing much more than a hundred pounds, he became a Pony Express rider.

“Well, one day—I was just a kid and wanted to do everything that real men did—I sat in to a game. I never won a turn, and the little money I had, just melted like grease under a New Mexico sun. After I got out of the place this chap came up to me and asked me to go to his shack.

“I went. He got out a deck of cards, and a pencil and paper, and, in about an hour, he showed me more tricks and more crooked ways of playing than I had ever thought there could be.

“‘Now, son,’ he said to me, ‘take a tip from an old-timer. Don’t play in a professional game until ye’re slick enough to be able to tell when the game is crooked against ye, an’ until ye’re quick enough with a gun to be able to make good any protest ye feel inclined to make.

“‘Mind ye,’ he went on, ‘I ain’t sayin’ that every gamblin’ joint is crooked. It ain’t, not for a minute! There’s a-plenty o’ players that know as much about a game as the man that’s

dealin' it, an' a slip-up means bein' buried with ye're boots on, but every professional gambler knows how to be crooked. I've known plenty of 'em, in my time; I reckon I know a hundred o' the quick-fingers. I'm sayin' that a good half o' them never made a crooked play in their lives, but you ain't never goin' to be able to tell which ones they are.

“ ‘I ain't goin' to talk to ye about the morals o' gamblin'; it wouldn't sound good, comin' from me. But this here is sure, you ain't earnin' nothin', gamblin', you ain't producin' nothin', an', if ye win, what ye get comes out o' some other fellow's pocket. When I fust realized that gamblin' is a form o' stealin', I quit right then an' thar.

“ ‘I'll tell ye just how it happened. A tenderfoot, regular softie greenhorn, come out from the East. I was dealin' at a little minin' joint called White Bonanza, in Colorado. This tenderfoot sat in the game, and, like you, to-night, he lost from the first turn.

“ ‘“I say, you know,” he blurts out, “you must be cheating!”

“ ‘Well, if it hadn't been for his blamed Eastern accent, I'd ha' shot without thinkin'.

As it was, every one ducked. I jest looked at him an' said,

“ “ “Young man, that means shootin' out here.”

“ “He got pretty white, an' said,

“ “ “I—I didn't mean any harm, but when you get a man's money and he hasn't any opportunity to get it back, it looks queer, don't you know? After all, old chap, all gambling is cheating.”

“ “The rest o' the boys begun to hustle him away, but I stopped 'em, an' made him explain. He didn't know any more about monty than a hog does about a side-saddle, but he could argufy the spots off'n the cards. After he got through, I sat a-thinkin'.

“ “ “Boys,” I said, “this kid is right, though he don't know which end of a gun to load. I'm a-goin' to earn money after this.”

“ “One o' the boys, who had a claim that hadn't panned out any too good, though there was pay dirt in it, sung out,

“ “ “I'll trade you, sight unseen, my claim for what you got in the bank and yo'r lay-out.”

“ “ “You're covered,” says I, and I ain't

never bet a cent on a card from that day to this. Keep away from it, kid, an' you won't ever regret it.'

"Ever since then, McCaleb," Shane concluded, "I've done just that thing. I've let gambling alone and now I'm sufficiently ahead of the game to be able to buy a herd when I go down south, and drive it up myself."

CHAPTER XV

STOCKING THE WEST

A COUPLE of days later, "Clip" came up from Ellsworth. Abilene was booming, for several herds had come up and nearly two hundred cowboys were in town. There being no market for ponies, it was decided to drive the spares in a remuda back to Texas, and, as there were six chuck wagons, stores were laid in and a gay procession started—a month's riding and nothing to do!

With one of the outfits was "Sweetheart" Haughton. The nickname suggests the feminine sex, but "Sweetheart" was altogether masculine. He was a young fellow of about twenty years of age, with a curiously soft and gentle voice and manners which went with his voice. For quite a while, on the way up, the outfit had thought he was a girl, but when, in a pinch, on the crossing of the flooded Red River, he stripped off his clothes and took a rope across

which three of the older men had failed to do, he showed himself a man and a game one at that.¹

Still, his voice was against him, and, though he was an average cow hand, he was the butt of the outfit on the way up, as though he had possessed all the weaknesses of the typical tender-foot. They did get a few good ones over on him. He was wearing a blue flannel shirt, with white buttons, and the boys persuaded him that this was some sort of ceremonial costume for the Indians, and, all the time the outfit was in Indian Territory "Sweetheart" wore his undershirt outside his shirt, with his sleeves rolled up to the shoulder, and got his arms all sunburned and blistered. Another day, when a mirage showed a lake of water, they sent him riding off there to see if the water was alkali or sweet. They stole all his cigarette papers and made him use prickly-pear cactus skin—which doesn't make a bad cigarette paper at all—but which is almost impossible to get without filling oneself full of spines. They put up a fake Indian

¹ There is but one record of a girl masquerading as a boy on the Old Cow Trail; this was "Billie Mathews," with S. P. Houghton's outfit, in 1888.

alarm, when he was on night herd. Naturally he rode tail of the herd. But "Sweetheart" was game. He took everything with that gentle smile and only protested occasionally in his high-pitched voice.

Naturally, going back without cattle, the outfits just figured on having the time of their lives with "Sweetheart." It was to be a grand "Whoop 'er up, Liz!" every night. Shane felt sorry for the lad, but he knew that the boys would not be likely to do anything serious.

The third night out, everything was set for a big joke. "Sweetheart" was "skeery" of Indians, and some of the boys got ready to run off the horses, fixed up as braves, and have "Sweetheart" trail them.

About ten o'clock, though, fully an hour before the time set for the spectacular "raid," there came a sudden,

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Every one leaped from sleep to his feet. It was a black dark night. Questions hurtled around. Who had done the shooting?

No one.

Yet no one had been hurt.

Some of the older hands looked grave. In-

dians would not attack in such a way, and horse rustlers would be hardly likely to venture near an outfit with nearly a hundred cowboys in it. It looked more as though some special enemy of one of the fellows in the outfit was trailing them. They spent an uneasy night, and the "raid" did not come off.

The next night, at just about the same hour, the same thing happened. Again three shots, and silence.

The boss of the outfit grew suspicious. He called each of the boys and asked him, personally, if he had fired. Every one denied it, and that was sufficient, for the cowboy did not lie. The men stayed awake until after midnight, when the moon rose. There was not a sign of Indian nor rustler.

Some of the more superstitious began to be troubled, and one of the negro cooks was found on his knees beside a chuck-wagon, praying for dear life.

Next night, there was no alarm. Whoever was following them, they thought, was outdistanced, or had given up the chase. Still, when they made camp the night following, the boss picked a high place, so that, in case of any alarm

it would be easier to stand off any intruder.

But, at ten o'clock, or a little later, there came,

Bang! Bang! Bang! *Bang!* BANG! BANG!

A whole succession of Bangs! All in a circle round the camp. There could not have been more noise if a circle of Indians had been within fifty yards of the wagons.

Simultaneously, every cowboy in the outfit pulled his six-shooter and fired wildly into the darkness.

There followed a moment of dead silence, while every one listened for the groans of the wounded or the pounding hoof-beats of receding ponies.

Not a groan, not a sound.

Then, in the stillness, the gentle voice of "Sweetheart" was heard, remarking drowsily,

"Why don't you chaps go to sleep? I'll catch the fellow in the morning."

They brought him up blinking and tried to make him explain, but all he would say was,

"I'll catch the fellow in the morning."

Finally, the camp settled down to sleep, and slumbers were undisturbed until the cook's cry:

"Come an' get it!"

Over the usual hasty breakfast, some of the boys turned to "Sweetheart" and said, with irony and scorn commingled,

"Where's this hyar rustler you was a-goin' to catch?"

"I've got him!" declared "Sweetheart."

Whereupon he turned his back a moment, so that no one could see what he was doing, then turned again swiftly and threw something on the ground in front of the circle,

"BANG!"

It was a cannon cracker.

The boys looked at the still smouldering cartridge of red paper and just gasped.

"If you-all want to take a look around," said "Sweetheart," "you'll find a whole ring o' those cracker cases on the ground. I fixed 'em up with long fuses last night."

He smiled amiably.

"Guess we'll call it square for the blue shirt and the mirage, boys!"

And that outfit was the butt of the other five outfits all the way down to Texas. The joke was on those punchers, and they took it in good part. "Sweetheart" had no trouble after that, and the "Indian raid" never came off.

Returning with "Clip" Shope to the Brazos country, Shane decided to buy a herd of his own, to drive up the trail. He spent the winter of 1869-1870 making arrangements with various ranchmen. Only a few asked for a money deposit on the cattle, as Shane was not yet well known in Texas. The fact that he had been on Kit Carson's ranch was enough assurance for others, and, in general, at that time, a man's word was as good as his bond. Most of the trail drives were made on honor, and if the manifold accidents of the trail caused losses, no man's future was menaced by past debts. The slate was wiped clean and next year's operations began anew.

Altogether, Shane bought 600 head, mostly at \$10 apiece, though he got one bunch of 100 head for \$9 apiece. "Swiftly," a cowboy with whom Shane had chummed on the way down, offered to join him, and put in \$500 apiece toward expenses, "Swiftly" borrowing the money. The arrangement was that "Swiftly" should be trail boss, at \$100 per month, and was to be paid back his \$500 with a \$250 bonus at the end of the trip providing that the losses on the drive were less than ten per cent. Shane took all the responsi-

bility of the possible losses from Indians, stampedes, blizzards, and the like.

"Swiftly" was a good trail boss, and a score of things of which Shane would never have thought, arose to convince him of his wisdom in not undertaking to be trail boss himself. Thus, having camped on the southwestern side of Red River, at the crossing—the river having a bend at that point—Shane was eager to cross at sunrise, especially as other herds were coming up behind. "Swiftly" ordered a delay until noon. Shane protested, and wanted to start at once to get ahead of the other herds.

"Yo're grabbin' the brandin' iron by the hot end," retorted "Swiftly." "If yo' try to swim cattle across a river with the sun in their eyes, they're a-goin' to mill on yo', sure. Why? Cow beasts are made that way, that's all I know."

Shane doubted, but when he saw that the bosses of the other herds were waiting likewise, he decided that Swiftly knew what he was talking about.

A couple of days later, a party of Indians rode up demanding "Who-Haws." Without comment, "Swiftly" cut out three lame drag-

heifers from the tail of the herd, and went on.

“Ain’t no manner o’ good refusin’,” he explained, “if Injuns get it again’ yo’, they’ll stampede yo’r herd, or run off the hosses, or some other breed o’ deviltry. Yo’ got to stand for it.”

The Canadian River was roaring high, too, but “Swiftly” made a raft of three floating logs, which he roped, to ferry the chuck wagon over. The herd swam the river without the loss of a single head. A little further on, 31 of the cattle broke away in a stampede, and when the boys trailed them they found they’d got into a herd of buffalo drifting north, and so were lost.

Yet it was a successful drive. It had cost Shane \$5,900 for the cattle, \$1,000 for expenses and the repayment of “Swiftly” of the \$750, making an outlay of \$7,650 in all. Shane stayed at Abilene for a couple of months, selling the cattle, on which he realized an average of \$26 apiece, leaving a profit on six months’ work—counting the round-up and road-branding, the drive and \$500 he spent at Abilene during the selling—of \$6,566. This time, going to Leavenworth to see his mother, he took the train, Shane’s first trip on a railroad.



ON THE OLD COW TRAIL.
The crossing at Milk River, Kansas, one of the famous points on the San Antonio-Abilene trail
across Indian Territory.

Returning to Texas that fall, Shane helped in the autumn round-up, and made arrangements to take a herd next spring, but it was only a small one. Prices, too, were low, and he did not clear more than \$1,000 in the year's work. He got back early that year and hired out as cowboy to the Reversed Seven outfit, staying with it until spring.

That year he had no chance to get a herd of his own but went as trail boss of a herd sent up by the Dewees. It was on this trip that one of the riders, Otis Ives, his horse, and fifteen of the cattle were killed by the same lightning flash. Indian Territory, or Oklahoma, as it is now known, like Nebraska, is famous for its destructive lightning storms.

It was one such of these displays that G. W. Mills, of Lockhart, Texas, driving with Mark Withers, one of the well-known old-timers, described graphically as follows:

“Near Stinking Water I had an experience with lightning that I know rivals the experience of any man who ever went up the trail; how we escaped death I have never understood.

“The storm hit us about 12 o'clock at night, there was some rain, and to the northwest I

noticed just a few bats of lightning; then it hit us in full fury and we were in the midst of a wonderful electric storm.

“We had the following varieties of lightning—all playing close at hand, I tell you—it first commenced like flash lightning, then came forked lightning, followed by the peculiar blue lightning, after that show it rapidly developed into ball lightning, which rolled along the ground, after that spark lightning; then, most wonderful of all, it settled down on us like a fog, the air smelled of burning sulphur, you could see it on the horns of the cattle, on the ears of the horses and on the brims of our hats; it grew so warm we thought we would burn up with it, and M. A. Withers and Joe Lewis, old timers, told me afterwards that they had never seen the like of it in all their experiences. Needless to say, we were all on guard that night, the cattle not giving us much trouble, though, the constant flashes keeping them from moving much.”

After the lightning storm which killed Ives, the drive went along smoothly. Shane had 100 head of his own in the bunch, and, prices being good, he cleared \$3,500 on wages and on the drive. By now the boy had a fair bank roll,

and on his return to Texas he made an arrangement to go as trail boss for a herd owned by McCutcheon and West, of Lavaca County. Sol West, a younger brother, went as "big boss"—as the term was when an owner supervised the outfit. This time the shipping point was Ellsworth, instead of Abilene. It was a disastrous trip.

With the outfit, Shane left Lavaca County on February 27, 1874, starting as early as seemed safe, in order to take advantage of the spring prices, for the low figures of 1872 had taught the Texans that, even in a poor year, the spring herds made money. The rest of the herd joined next day, at Gonzales Prairie, in Gonzales County.

On the 1st day of March, the outfit crossed the Red River into Indian Territory without any mishap, having had a splendid drive so far, with clear open weather all the way. But as they soon found out, this good fortune was not to last much longer.

Steadily pushing on towards the north, with occasional stampedes—one night the cattle broke away twenty-two times—the herd made its slow way through the Territory, and late in

the afternoon of April 6, the outfit reached Rush Creek, where the two prongs come together just above the trail.

The range had been burned off by the Indians and was black, but, being protected by two streams, the grass between these prongs was fine. They stayed there for two days, and, on the morning of the 8th took an early start for a camp, on Hell-Roaring Creek, about fifteen miles further north—a long day's travel,—which Shane had ridden ahead and chosen because grass and water were plentiful there. As the boy knew well, cattle can get along two and even three days without feed, but more than twenty-four hours without water makes matters desperate.

The sun was not yet up when the herd was fairly started, and, not making any nooning at all, by three o'clock in the afternoon, the camp was in sight, and the cook who had gone ahead in the chuck wagon, had a fire going and chuck ready.

All that day Sol West and Shane had been worried. There was a nasty twist in the air, with a cold rain and sleet in spells. The wind was freshening, and, during the last hour be-

fore making camp, the boys had hard work to hold the cattle from turning.

Just as the head cattle were about a hundred yards from the camp, which was partly protected by some hills, the blizzard could be heard coming over the prairie with a moan, which rapidly increased into a roar and burst with a wild whistling shriek.

No cattle could or would face such a blast. Despite the most heroic efforts of the boys pointing the herd, the leaders turned their tails to the blizzard and began to drift toward the south. That meant a bad night of it, and Shane was thoroughly worried. The snow was hard and powdery, and the wind intense. No amount of clothing was any protection, and the whole outfit, men, horses and cattle, all recently from warm and sunny Texas, chilled and chilled and chilled.

Chuck would have been good, but Shane did not dare to give the boys a minute, hoping against hope to hold the cattle bunched before dark. During the last five miles, counting from the place where the tail of the herd was when the blizzard struck, every pony on which the boys were riding, actually froze to death under

them, and dropped. Shane's horse was the last to go down.

Being trail boss, Shane had told the boys that when their horses fell, they should at once make their way back to camp. As Shane's horse had held out the longest, he was furthest from the camp, but two other of the boys, Charles and Jake, both of course afoot, since their horses had frozen, too, were near by. In the snow, the sleet, and the wind, and on foot, those three managed to check the herd, and, the wind having subsided a little, the cattle stayed bunched.

None of the three had eaten since early morning. A fire was the first thing necessary. Of course, each of the boys had a box of matches in his pockets, but Shane and Jake tried in vain to get theirs out. Their hands were so numb that the fingers would not close. But for their big gauntlets, their hands would have been frost-bitten and gangrened, necessitating amputation. That happened more than once in the early days in Montana.

At this juncture, Shane saw a light gleaming in the distance, and, at once, the three weary and half-frozen cowboys started for the gleam. It proved to be a light from a dug-out, and though

only two miles away, it took nearly two hours to reach it. The three men were just about done out.

The dug-out, which was in a side-hill, had two rooms, and the men living there at once took the strangers in as soon as they heard the hard luck story. After a hearty supper, the cowboys rolled up on the floor in the spare room with plenty of bedding. Twenty seconds after Shane's head touched the rough pillow, he heard nothing more of the blizzard; he would not have heard a sound if it had howled a thousandfold louder. But being boss, the responsibility of the herd was on his mind, and he woke at the first sense of dawn. He wakened the other two cowboys and went out.

As it happened, under a shed, also partly a dug-out, Shane saw a dun pony standing, with a saddle and bridle hanging on a peg, right handy. Without waiting to ask any questions, he saddled and bridled the pony and told the other men to follow, afoot, in the direction of the herd. The blizzard had died down during the night, and not an animal had moved. There they were, snug and sound.

Just about the same time, Shane could see

some of the other boys coming down from the camp on foot, and, with a good deal of trouble—for handling cattle on foot is a very different matter from doing it on horseback—they got the herd started back to the camp, the snow and sleet being a foot and a half deep.

A couple of miles down the creek, one of the boys called,

“Shane, here’s another buckaroo comin’ on his hind legs!”

It proved to be the trail boss of a herd just behind Shane’s herd. He had suffered even worse luck from the blizzard, for every one of his horses and the work oxen for the chuck-wagon had frozen to death, and, since the blizzard struck him in the open, his cattle had scattered in every direction and there was no hope for him to recover them on foot. He had counted on borrowing or buying some horses from Sol West. Shane’s cattle, having stayed bunched, were driven with ease to the good camping ground, which, partly sheltered by the hills, was not so deep in sleet.

On arriving at the camp, riding the dun pony, Shane found there Jim Taylor, the owner of the dug-out, whose horse the young puncher had so



Courtesy of A. Methfessel.

"BOYS! THEY'RE MOVIN'!"

Night stampede in the Indian territory over rough ground.

unceremoniously borrowed. And Jim Taylor was fighting mad, even going so far as to mention the word "hoss-thief"! Shane kept himself in hand, though he felt his choler rising, for that is the most scoundrelly accusation on the plains.

After all, the boy knew that he was in the wrong, and he pacified his host of the previous night until the latter agreed that he would accept \$1.50 for the use of the horse that morning. Finding him in this mood, Sol West arranged to exchange some steers for three horses and a mule, and included the \$1.50 in the trade. But their troubles were not yet over.

Two men were behind with the "remuda" of spare saddle horses, used on alternate days for trail-driving. Fearing that they might have run into trouble also, during the blizzard, Shane sent two of the hands back to meet them, and direct them into camp.

Going back about eight miles they met the horse wranglers coming up on foot, as the whole sixty-five head of horses had frozen to death the night before, all huddled together in a space not much larger than the site of a dwelling house, and the boys had only saved themselves

from meeting a like fate by starting a big fire in the black-jack timber and keeping it going all night.

Using two of the horses and the mule to hold the herd together, Sol West rode the other horse to an Indian encampment near by and traded some steers for three of their ponies. The Indian ponies, small, wiry, and in partial shelter, had stood the night which the Spanish mustangs from the warm south could not survive. Not one of West's whole herd of seventy-eight horses had lasted out that blizzard, which was only of three or four hours' duration.¹

With six horses and a mule the herd was started on to the north and the herd reached Ellsworth May 20, seventy-two days in all, not considered a slow trip for that season of the year. Buying was scattering that year, and autumn had come before Shane started back for Texas. When Sol West presented his accounts to the firm with whom he was dealing, after a very exact figuring, it was found that the profits of the drive had netted exactly \$1.50, of which one-half was due to Shane. He had

¹ From an interview with Mr. Sol West, now a resident of San Antonio.

earned just seventy-five cents and his board during the entire year.

In 1875 came what was known as the "Big Steal." Cattle rustlers grew numerous and operated in large gangs. Many ranches were cleaned out entirely, especially in the western part of the State, and herds were run off in all directions, some to Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and even California.

Shane was asked to go with a "Minute Company" after one of these gangs, which was operating in the Rio Hondo country, as he knew that section of New Mexico well, but since the descriptions of the gang leader tallied with that of Shane's old foreman, "Smash," he did not want to take a hand in running an old partner on the wrong end of a rope. "Smash," if it were he, was never caught, however.

That year Shane took a herd of his own up the trail without special incident, as he did, also, to Dodge City, in 1876, making a handsome profit, each time.

The year 1876 witnessed a most important change in the Northwest. In that year the Sioux refused to remain upon the reservation in Dakota to which they had been driven by the

treaty of 1867, and broke out on the warpath. At the battle of Little Big Horn, Custer and his party were slain to a man. American vengeance was swift and Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa Sioux escaped into Canada, where, five years later, they surrendered and became Federal prisoners for some time.

This outbreak and its subsequent quelling, together with the government's immediate action in strengthening all the frontier posts of the Northwest, ended the power of the horse Indians on the plains, and the simultaneous pushing of the transcontinental railroads added an equally important factor.

The effect of this was felt at once in Texas. Not only was there a growing demand for cattle for the Union Stock Yards of the great growing city of Chicago, but there was almost an equal demand from Eastern capitalists who wanted to stock the unused ranges of the Northwest. There was also the pressure from the smaller ranchers of Texas, who were pushed westward and ever westward into the inhospitable and arid New Mexico borders by the encroachments of civilization and the fencing of the ranges in the middle of the state.

The first barbed-wire fence was put up in 1872, and, within the next three or four years, most of the land between San Antonio and the coast was under fence, and fences were spreading northward rapidly. Stock owners who ran their cattle on the open range and did not own land, were thus driven northwards, and the years 1876 to 1880 witnessed a steady and continuous movement of cattle up the Old Cow Trail.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this trail in any consideration of the cowboy days of the West. In order to make this clear, it is necessary to remember that the cattle range—which was the old buffalo range—was a strip of land approximately 250 miles wide and 1250 miles long, running in a northwesterly direction from North Texas to the borders of Canada. It took in the western part of Indian Territory, western Kansas, western Nebraska, western South Dakota and western North Dakota, and also, eastern Colorado, eastern Wyoming and eastern Montana.

This whole region was, therefore, bordered on the east by the constantly increasing population of grangers and farmers, taking up corn

lands to the south and wheat lands to the north; and, on the west, it was bordered by the foothills of the Rockies and a mining population.

Again, it is to be remembered that all rivers of this region, without exception, flow into the Mississippi, and, therefore flow east and west. It is further to be remembered that the sources of these rivers are in the west, where they dwindle into creeks, and, in summer time, dry up entirely. This is especially the case in the western part of the Panhandle of Texas and through New Mexico. To drive a large herd northward over the Staked Plains was not feasible.

Yet there was a definite and positive barrier to a gradual development of the cattle industry to the north, a barrier several hundred miles in width. This barrier was the Indian Territory. To understand what a part this played, it will be of assistance to grasp just what Indian Territory—now the State of Oklahoma—was in those times.

Indian Territory was originally set apart by Congress, in 1834, for the settlement of the five southern tribes, the Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Choctaw and Chickasaw. But, in 1866, the government negotiated new treaties, taking away

from these five tribes what had already been given them, and, in these new treaties, the government claimed the right to settle other tribes in the Territory. Thus grants of land were made to the Sauk and Foxes in 1867, to the Osage, Kansa, Pottawatomie, Absentee Shawnee and Wichita in 1871 and 1872, to the Pawnee in 1876, to the Ponca and Nez Perce in 1878, to the Otoe and Missouri in 1881, to the Iowa and Kickapoo in 1883. In the southwest section of the territory, the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache were located in 1867 and the Arapahoe and Cheyenne in the northwest section, in 1869.

The phrase "grant of land" is to be taken with a distinct remembrance that the government, by force of arms, drove such tribes as the Ponca Sioux off lands which they had held for centuries, rich, fertile hunting-grounds, hundreds of square miles in extent, and gave them instead, a reservation in barren land in an arid State, where hundreds of them starved to death. The proceedings were high-handed, arbitrary, callous and unjust. It is not idly that the years 1781-1881 are known in Indian affairs, even in Washington, as "The Century of Dishonor."

This stretch of Indian land—by no means as

well watered as the number of rivers running through it would seem to suggest—populated by tribes and the remnants of tribes, all of whom had suffered cruelly at American hands, lay as a barrier between Texas and Kansas. To put the matter otherwise, through it lay the only road to that vast cattle country of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, the Dakotas and Montana, to which reference has been made. That hostile and dangerous country must be crossed, with all the toils and difficulties of the march, and with Indians ever ready for an outbreak.

Across the hostile barrier, through this dangerous country, there ran but one trail—the Chisholm Trail, the Old Cow Trail. White ranchers were not allowed to settle in Indian Territory, therefore the animals for stocking the great prairies of the West—most of them, in the early days, Texas long-horns—must go up the Old Cow Trail.

By far the larger number of the early ranchers were Texans, who moved bag and baggage up the Trail. Most of the cowboys were Texans, and the quirt and the spur was the railroad of the Trail. Likewise the cow-ponies of the

West, those animals which, as every puncher will declare, are the nearest creatures to man in his intelligence, have in them a strong strain of the blood of their Spanish wild mustang sires who were ridden or driven in bands up the Old Cow Trail.

Does this seem extreme? The figures are worth noting.

The Old Trail was opened in 1867 and it was closed forever in 1895, when Oklahoma had become a settled state, and when railroads were beginning to spread their network over the Western States. During those twenty-eight years, over 9,800,000 head of cattle and 1,000,000 head of horse stock went up the trail, which, at ten dollars a head, put more than a billion dollars into the State of Texas. It made the prosperity of the Lone Star State, but, in turn, Texas started the prosperity of the cattle country of the west.

Shane, like many other of the Texas cowboys, having earned a little money, and seeing the wire fences creeping over the landscape, with all the change of life that they implied, bought outright for himself a herd of 350 head.

With these, he started up the trail in 1877 to be a pioneer in the Northwest country where the buffalo were not yet all quite gone, and where the open range belonged only to God, the government, and the cowboy.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE ON THE RANCH

REMEMBERING his winter with the Blackfeet in the Valley of the Musselshell River, and recalling the excellent feed and water in that section, Shane decided that, if possible, he would settle in that section. First, however, on arriving at the borders of Montana with his herd, Shane took a ride to a fort where Buffalo Bill was stationed, to get his advice about the likelihood of Indian trouble in that country.

Buffalo Bill, who had ridden every inch of that country and knew it well—as he did most of the West—thought for a while and then said:

“The Blackfeet, that is the Piegan tribe you know, who used to be on the Musselshell, are on an agency now, and not giving any trouble. Even if they were on the shoot, you’re a friend of the tribe. I wouldn’t advise you to go into Sioux country yet awhile, but if you think those Texas ‘pilgrims’ of yours can stand a Montana

winter—go ahead. But it does get most terrible cold up that way!”

“I’d been figuring on that, Billy,” answered Shane, “but there’s a section lying between the Musselshell and the Lower Yellowstone where there’s a row of buttes, almost like hills, sticking right up in the air.”

“I know,” said Buffalo Bill, nodding his head, “Mountain Sheep Bluffs, they’re called on the maps.”

“We went there once, when I was with the Blackfeet. I didn’t notice it much at the time, but, as I look back on it, it seems to me that they ran about southeast and northwest.”

“They do,” the scout agreed.

“I’ve been figuring, that if there weren’t any herds in that section, I could pasture in the summer around Timber Creek and Big Dry, and, in the winter, bring the herds to the lee of those bluffs, so that I could drive them up to timber for the worst weather.”

“You’ll have to cut hay to winter them,” was the caution, “snow gets deep in there! But if you can hold them over the winter, they’ll get rollin’ fat in the spring. Then you’ll have a quick market at Fort Buford, and it won’t be

long before the Northern Pacific Railroad goes through there."

"Sounds pretty good to me," commented Shane cheerfully.

The scout looked dubious.

"You've got long-horns, haven't you?"

"Of course."

"Well," said Buffalo Bill, "I'm not a cattle-man, but I've watched the business a whole lot. The wise ones, now, are talking about putting a tougher breed o' range cattle into this northern country, who can stand the winters easier, get fat more easily, and aren't half as much trouble to handle. I'd think about buying some o' those short-horns, if I were you, with your profits in the spring. That is, if your herd doesn't all die off, which it might."

"Is it really as bad as that?" queried Shane, anxiously.

"Sometimes, yes; sometimes, no. Depends on the season. Frost and cold will only kill the weaklings, but if you have a deep long-lasting snow—why you'll have to dig down in your pocket for money for another herd in the spring. But your idea about Mountain Sheep Bluffs is good; the timber may save you."

Accordingly, by the beginning of August, Shane got his herd, losing only six head on the way, up to the section where he intended to ranch. It was a desperate venture, for, after paying all the expenses of the herd and the long drive almost to the Canadian border from Texas, he still had to pay three men and a cook all winter and buy ammunition and provisions to keep going until the spring. And, if it turned out to be a hard winter, everything would be lost.

The range could not have been better, and Shane's heart rose when he saw it and measured it with a cowboy's eye. He had learned how to judge a range, and how best to handle cattle on it. To the north was plenty of feed and not another herd for miles around in any direction. To the south of Mountain Sheep Bluffs, where he planned to build the home ranch, there were two valleys that ran up into the hills with small but swift mountain streams. These valleys would make ideal shelter for the cattle if a severe snap should come in the winter.

A rough log shanty was put up, and, remembering Buffalo Bill's warning, about the winter, Shane went to a lot of trouble chinking the

cracks with mud and making the building as weatherproof as possible. The hay question gave him some concern. He knew that such things as mowing-machines existed, but he had never seen one, and certainly there was no town near, where he could buy one. He rode down to the nearest herd-owner, on the other side of the Yellowstone, about eighty miles away and asked him what he did for hay.

"Don't do nothin'," was the reply. "I jest chance it. I'm always a-goin' to get me one of them grass-cuttin' machines, but I ain't got to it."

"And you got through last winter all right?"

"Didn't lose more'n ten per cent."

"That's enough! I don't want to lose any."

The older stockman only grinned at him, and said,

"You get away with a loss o' ten per cent. on Texas 'doghies,' an' you'll be doin' fine. Your herd would be increasin' at that."

Shane, however, felt that he didn't want to lose any of his herd, and determined that, the following spring, he would see what a grass-cutting machine looked like.

That fall was more like frontiersmen's work

than cowboys'. There was the house to build and a corral to put up. Shane built this corral Texas fashion, five feet high, consisting of sound poles piled one on top of the other, and jammed between double posts, seven feet apart. Every day one man would ride out to keep track of the herd and of the horses, and two would stay at home.

Grass was plenty and the cattle were growing fat. Being close to the Mountain Sheep Bluffs, too, game was plentiful, and there was no lack of variety in the diet. The men were well contented, for the weather was fine and there were no Indian raids to fear. Altogether the work was easier than driving on the trail, and Shane was paying the same wages.

Autumn drew down towards winter. A few snow flurries began to fly. These were followed by a spell of fine weather and, though the days were warm, the nights were growing cold. Hoar frost was on the ground every morning.

The cattle had divided into several bunches, so that this fall round up was not easy for three men, but the herds were small and Shane succeeded in finding and driving them all to the south side of the Mountain Sheep Bluffs. There

the cattle stayed, peacefully enough, roaming as long-horns always will, but being guarded by one rider, lest they should stray too far from the valleys Shane purposed to use for protection from the winter storms.

One of Shane's great problems was the question of the cow-ponies. His experience in 1874, three years before, when every horse in the herd had been frozen to death, had been enough to warn him not to bring mustangs so far north. He had sold or traded his Texan animals on the way for the smaller, shaggier ponies of the Indian type, the truer type of broncos. They could fend for themselves all winter without any trouble, unless it were a very severe season, of that he was sure. But it was out of the question to spare a man to act as horse-wrangler all the time. Since he had no hay, the ponies could not be kept at the home ranch. There was nothing for it but for the boys to wrangle them every morning in turns, bring the bunch into the corral, let each fellow rope the pony he needed and let the others out to feed again. The horse herd could look after itself.

November passed into December. The snow did not come. But, instead, there dropped upon

Montana, that year, one of those weeks of silent, terrible cold, under which great trunks of trees break open, when the ground rings like metal as a hoof falls on it, when even great rivers freeze.

Warning the boys against frost-bite and being equally careful himself, Shane and the two cowboys started out before dawn one morning in the direction where the cattle were last seen. It was a cold as of death, far colder than in the blizzards in Indian Territory. But animals can stand an intense cold on a windless day. Shortly after sunrise, the three riders came up with the main herd of cattle. They were not feeding. They were huddled together and looked sick.

It was hard to get them moving, but at last the herd was strung out. Driving them very slowly, never faster than a walk, Shane and the boys headed them into one of the ravines, which, facing south, had the full benefit of the weak wintry sun. The cattle picked up courage at once, and began to feed.

Next day the other two bunches were found, but five of the cattle were dead. Two nights of that terrific cold had been too much for Texas-

raised steers. The bronco herd had taken to the brush and seemed unconcerned.

That spell of cold lasted a week, then, as soon as it broke, Shane drove the cattle out of the ravine. It would not do to have all the feed eaten, for the worst of the winter had not come yet. Snow still held off. The days were bright, though snappy. The pile of firewood behind the ranch house grew to generous proportions, despite the huge fires made in the great chimney every night.

Then, one afternoon, one of the boys, coming in, reported that the cattle were drifting in steadily, making for the ravine where they had been during the preceding cold snap.

"Do you want 'em drove back?" queried the man.

Shane thought for a moment and then shook his head.

"Maybe they know as much about Montana weather as we do," he answered, "they can't know less."

At midnight it began to snow. By four o'clock in the morning, a norther was hurtling down at full force, and by daylight it rose to a furious gale, blowing clouds of blinding snow-

312 THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

dust. A great drift piled up, a hundred yards from the ranch-house door.

Shane went out of the door to look around, and had to fight to make his way back.

“To-day,” he remarked crisply, “we stay home.”

“Who says our Texas doghies haven’t got cow sense?” put in another.

“Do you suppose they all got in the ravine?” Shane queried.

“They was headed plumb for it, an’ the leaders had hit it a’ready when dark come on,” was the reply. “I reckon they’d all keep a-goin’.”

“Well,” said Shane, aggrieved at his own lack of foresight, “if they’d had to wait for our sense to drive ’em in, they never would have been driven; and I’d be out about three hundred and fifty head!”

For three days the storm raged, rising to a blizzard in the last couple of hours before it prepared to stop, and then almost suddenly, the air cleared, a whitish color loomed through the gray pall that had hung over everything, and a thin watery blue sky appeared.

So heavy had been the snow and yet so fierce the wind, that, from those three days alone,

there were places where drifts of snow had piled up seventy and eighty feet high,¹ and, right beside the drift, there was no more snow on the ground than that which was held by the stubble of the grass. There was thus feed, though scanty feed, for the herd, and the steers were driven out of the ravine. Apparently, not an animal had suffered, though, owing to the fact that the ravine had been protected from the wind, the snow had fallen more evenly and the ground was covered to a depth of about fourteen inches. This, however, left some of the longer grasses above the snow, inducing the cattle to nuzzle down for feed.

There was a second bad storm in January, but this time the weather gave notice of its approach. It was not nearly as severe, but lasted for ten days. When the weather cleared, the ravine had been eaten off in many places. Remembering what he had observed when with the Black-feet, twenty years before, Shane and the boys cut down a lot of cottonwood trees, and the cattle browsed on the twigs and the tops. The

¹ The author, while handling a herd on the Turtle Mountains, North Dakota, saw drifts which reached to the tops of poplars 150 feet high, and fifty feet away, the ground as free of snow as if it had been swept with a broom.

ponies, too, like the young bark of the cottonwoods, and it is healthy for them.

By February, the work on the ranch began to change in character. It was necessary for all hands to ride out among the cattle and bring in the cows which were soon to calve, or any animal which showed weakness, for, when the thaw came, the great menace of the northern rancher—miring—would begin to appear.

By the first week of March the ice began to break up, and all hands were busy from morning to night. All the streams were edged with deep bogs, and, since the grass sprouted there first, it was difficult to keep the cattle away from them. Besides, as the cattle for three or four months had been compelled to eat snow, they were eager for water and would stand in the bogs or in pools drinking gallons of the icy water and sinking steadily into the mud. Then, bloated and heavy, they had already sunk so deeply that they could only flounder, while, after the long hard winter, they were so thin and weak that they had not the strength to get out. A few vain struggles, and then the animals resigned themselves to their fate, for they would die, thus, in two or three days unless one of the cowboys rode by

and pulled them out with the rope, as Shane had done with the wild steer in the quicksand, when he was ranching in New Mexico for Kit Carson.

“Cattle may thus be lost in wonderfully small holes,” remarks Theodore Roosevelt, writing of his own ranch, which was not more than a hundred miles or so from the place where Shane had located, “often they will be found dead in a gulch but two or three feet across, in the quicksand of a creek so narrow that it could almost be jumped. An alkali-hole, where the water oozes out through the thick clay, is the worst of all, owing to the ropy tenacity with which the horrible substance sticks and clings to any unfortunate beast that gets into it.

“In the spring these mud-holes cause very serious losses among the cattle, and are, at all times, a fruitful source of danger; indeed, during an ordinary year, more cattle die from getting mired than from any other cause.

“In addition to this, they also prove very annoying to the rider himself, as getting his steed mired or caught in a quicksand is one of the commonest of the accidents that beset a horseman in the far West. This usually happens in fording a river, if the latter is at all high, or

else in crossing one of the numerous creeks, although I once saw a horse and rider suddenly engulfed while leisurely walking over what appeared to be dry land. They had come to an alkali mud-hole, an old buffalo wallow, which had filled up and was covered with a sun-baked crust, that let them through as though they had stepped on a trap-door. There being several of us along, we got down our ropes and dragged both unfortunates out in short order."

So full of quicksands were the small creeks to the south of Mountain Sheep Bluffs that it became a matter of routine to strip before crossing any of them, as, if a horse is not handicapped by the weight of a rider on his back, he can almost always plunge his way through. But to strip and wade or swim through creeks and then to put one's clothes on again on a wet body, in Montana, on a raw day in March and early April, is a part of cowboy life that could well be dispensed with.

The spring rains, too, begot their own danger. Much of the formation of that country is a friable sandstone, marl or "gumbo" clay—almost as bad as the appalling "gumbo" formations in Arkansas—and the spring thaws and

rains turned this latter into a sticky and slippery glue, on which it was almost impossible even for the clever-footed cow-ponies to keep from skating when on a sidehill. Shane had several nasty tumbles as a result of this, and one of the men was laid up for a couple of weeks from injuries received by his pony suddenly falling and rolling over him before he had time to dismount.

Under the thaws and rains, the grass grew rapidly and luxuriantly, and the cattle began to put on flesh so fast that one could almost see them fatten, hour by hour. The ponies, too, which had become scrawny-looking beasts during the winter, began to put on flesh and to look sleek and well. They had all to be brought in to the home ranch and broken anew to the saddle. A winter of running free makes even the most steady old pony skittish, and many of the horses which Shane had bought or swapped for his Texan mustangs on the way up had not been broken at all.

Such had to be roped and thrown before the hackamore—a braided hair-rope halter—and a leather blind could be put on them. Generally, when the pony was allowed to get up on his

feet, his eyes being still blinded, he stood still when the saddle was being tightly cinched on his back. Then the blind was raised to give Mr. Pony a chance to tire himself bucking around the corral to try and get rid of the saddle.

Again he was roped and the leather blind put back over his eyes—a job to be done with considerable care with a horse inclined to strike with his feet or who lunged wolf-like at his to-be rider with his bared teeth.

Thus blinded, the animal was led outside the corral, and, at the same moment the blind was lifted and the “buster” or “flash-rider” swung into the saddle. Then, “Whoopee!” up the pony would go, rearing or plunging, or stiff-legging, or sun-fishing, or bolting, or rolling, till spur and quirt convinced him that his rider could not be unseated. As three rides of about two hours each are supposed to be enough to break a wild bronco, it may well be imagined that such a horse is only half-broken. Unless incurably vicious, or a natural “outlaw,” he is, however, sufficiently handled for any cowboy to straddle him with ease.

Shane, however, had become a fairly good “buster” and was more careful in his handling



Photograph by the author.

"SUNFISHING."

Cowboy tackling a "wicked one," wild off the range. It took four men to saddle this horse, but the rider sat the brute.

of a spirited pony than the professional busters, who, really, do not train a horse, but merely break his spirit. As about ten horses to a man would be needed on the round-up, and as each horse required three or four rides before he realized that winter freedom was over and working days had come again, this handling of the horses took a couple of weeks. By that time, each man's string was considered "tame," though there was not one of them that was not ready to buck, several were bolters, and three, at least, had that most dangerous trick of falling over backwards on a rider.

A good deal of time was spent watching the cows who were calving and these were kept separate from the rest of the herd. Here the losses were fairly heavy, for though the rider holding this herd carried a Winchester, timber wolves got at least a dozen of the young calves.

In view of the fact that Shane was almost alone on the range, his round-up that spring was confined to his own animals. The four men working together, were able to rope and brand all the calves with the brand—the Pine Needle—which Shane had chosen and registered, and

he found himself, at the beginning of June, with an increase of ninety in his herd.

This accomplished, the boss of the Pine Needle Ranch drove 70 fat beeves to the shipping point, getting good figures and thus clearing his expenses for the trail drive to the north during the preceding year, for the settling of the ranch, and the handling of the cattle. There was not a cent left for himself, but he accounted the year a full success, since he had left the ranks of the hired cowboys and those of the trail-drivers and had become a ranchman for himself. Over the same ground where, twenty years before, a boy of fourteen years of age, he had been taken prisoner by the Blackfeet, now the Pine Needle herd grazed, and the Pine Needle was his own.

CHAPTER XVII

THE REAL COW-PUNCHER

It is frequently thought that the cowboy's life was full of adventure. This is somewhat of an error; it was, indeed, adventurous in character, but, on the whole, monotonous. True, it had not that maddening and stultifying monotony of the sheep-herder, which actually makes idiots of many, sullen savages of most, and morose hermits of all who live with the woolly imbeciles. But the wild rough-rider of the plains will always be misunderstood unless it is remembered that his days were long, his work was hard and dangerous, his occupation always the same, and his amusements few.

Certain cowboy stories and moving-picture plots have done a very great deal of harm in their misrepresentation of the cowboy. And this for four reasons: as a rule they show the cowboy skylarking at his work, drinking, gambling or shooting. In the first place, a cow

hand never skylarked at his work, there was too much of it to do and it must be done right; in the second place, he had little time and less opportunity for drinking and gambling; and, in the third place, gun-play was general mainly among the hangers-on of cow towns, not among the cowboys themselves. Every man who has lived in the West and punched cattle is aware of this.

Then it should be added that, in such misrepresentations, the ranchman is ordinarily confused with the cowboy. It is rare that one finds reference to the fact that a good ranchman must be a good business man, a good judge of stock, a man with some understanding of cattle diseases, a prudent and far-seeing estimator of local and of market conditions, and that it would be just as easy for an inexperienced man to make a success of a stock ranch as it would be for him to walk into the presidency of a big city bank without any previous training in finance.

More than anything else, one factor has contributed to this mistaken belief in the gay and riotous life of the cowboy. This one thing is the "round-up." It was, indeed, the great event of the year for the cowboy, but let no one

fall under the impression that it was a cowboy carnival! It meant, as a rule, ten minutes or less for breakfast before dawn, fourteen to sixteen hours of grinding work in the saddle, and a bed on the bare ground.

The round-up, like nearly all the principal features of the cattle life of the seventies and eighties, was a mere carrying forward of the system employed by the Mexicans, when, fifty years before, the Texans took over the southwestern portion of that State. It originated in the days of peonage, when Spanish dons, who were enormous land-owners, allowed their cattle and horses to run wild.

In the very early days, there was no branding. All the cattle found on a certain range belonged to the owner of that range. As ranges multiplied, however, and as herds increased, matters changed. The open range which, at one time, had been the exclusive possession of a Spanish grandee, became the joint possession of a number of Texas stockmen, whose herds ran together, or, to speak more correctly, in whose herds there were always stragglers belonging to some other owner.

Branding or marking of a certain character

had begun early, and this often took the form of notching, cutting or slitting the dew-lap or the ears. For example: the "jingle bob" of the famous John Chisum Jingle Bobs ranch, meant that the ear had been slit to the head and the pieces let flap. In Texas, however, even in early times, branding either on the hip, shoulder, or side had commenced. Early brands were perforce simple, being made with a long straight iron bar. Later, some of these were made short and had curved ends, with wooden handles, and later still, each outfit had its own branding irons with the end forged and shaped into the brand. Thus early brands were simple: such as the "X," the "II," and "TT" and so forth. The combined letters and figures: such as the B88 or the Quarter Circle Diamond, came later. The more elaborate brands such as: the "Thistle," "Clover," "Elkhorn," etc., belong to the latest period.

During 1879 and 1880 several more herds came up into the Yellowstone, and even into the Musselshell country. The winter of 1880-1881 was one of the worst ever known in Montana, but, by that time, Shane had bought a "grass-cutting machine" and with this he cut wild hay

from the borders of sloughs and put it up for the winter, so that he came out in the spring of 1881 with the loss of only 20 per cent of his herd. Many a rancher, during that winter, lost everything, for a drought in the preceding fall had been followed by early snow which had lain for nearly four months.

By 1882 the Musselshell, Yellowstone and Little Missouri region, covering that section on the borders of Montana and South Dakota, was taken up, and the open range was becoming heavily stocked, if not overstocked. Cattle conditions were verging towards those of Texas a decade earlier, in other words, the full swing of the cowboy days was on. This necessitated the establishment of the large community round-ups, the most characteristic features of those times. As round-ups on the open range are past history, a description of that one in which Shane took an important part in 1883 will serve to describe them all.

In this section the date of the round-up varied from the middle to the end of May. The end of April and the beginning of May, as has been said, were largely given to getting up the horses, breaking them in after the winter's freedom;

hiring extra men, hauling provisions for the chuck-wagon and a score of similar preparations.

Meantime, the Stockmen's Association—of which there is one for every State, or at least, for every part of a state—had mapped out the general round-up districts. This was a task requiring intimate knowledge of the lie of the country, pasturage conditions, and the estimated number of head on the range. Thus, for example, the region adjacent to the Pine Needle Ranch was marked by three round-ups, one centering on the Little Missouri, one on the Lower Yellowstone, and one on the Musselshell River.

Acting in conjunction with his neighbor to the north, who was using the range on which Shane had put his cattle the first year, and whose brand was the "B Double 8," Shane took three riders besides himself and one horse-wrangler, the "B Double 8" did the same, and one chuck-wagon served for both.

The horse-wranglers, be it understood, had, as their job, the keeping of the horses of the outfit together. As each rider took a string of ten ponies, as a rule, this meant a herd in the neighborhood of a hundred ponies. It was the

duty of the day wrangler to take the herd in the morning, after the riders had picked out and roped their mounts for the day, and to keep them on good pasture and water until toward evening, when he drove them back to the camp, holding them until all the riders were in and had off-saddled, when the tired ponies joined the herd, and the night wrangler took charge. It was the job of the latter to see that the ponies were held together during the night, and, before the first streaks of dawn, to drive them into the corral, so that the cowboys, as soon as they had been awakened and had swallowed a hasty breakfast, could rope, bridle, and saddle the horse they had picked out for the day's work.

On the way to the district round-up point, the outfit moved slowly, as it was essential that the ponies should arrive in the prime of condition. As the riders had nothing to do, a couple rode ahead of the horse-herd, and the rest on either side and to the tail, as otherwise the two wranglers might find it hard to keep the herd together. Ponies who have been wild all winter and are fresh and fat on the spring grass, are not always easy to drive. Moreover, for this move to the round-up point, the riders usually

picked the least tractable horses of their strings, in order to give them a further taste of discipline before actual work began. It was often, thus, a procession of bucking from morning until night. There was little showing-off, however, even though cowboys from another ranch were along, as the round-up was ahead and that was serious business.

The bedding, as well as the provisions, was carried in the chuck-wagon, generally a four-horse affair. For this work, the ponies usually were shod, as were some of the cow-ponies whose feet have become tender in the winter. In every outfit there was usually one man who could shoe horses well. At a pinch, every old-time cowboy could do so. The bedding was not elaborate. It consisted, almost invariably, of a small tarpaulin and two or three pairs of blankets. If the weather were cold, two or three of the riders slept together; in warmer weather, every man curled up alone.

Toward the end of the round-up, or if the weather were unusually hot, the mosquitoes—one of the many scourges of a cowboy's life, became terrible. "At sunset," writes Roosevelt, "I have seen the mosquitoes rise up from the

land like a dense cloud, to make the hot, stifling night one long torture; the horses would neither lie down nor graze, traveling restlessly to and fro until daybreak, their bodies streaked and bloody, and the insects settling on them to make them all one color—a uniform gray. On such a night, the bed-clothes make a man feel absolutely smothered, and yet his only chance for sleep is to wrap himself up tightly, head and all, and even then some of the pests will usually force their way in. Often enough, after a few hours of tossing, in a vain attempt to get some sleep, we rose, built a little fire of damp sage-brush—to make a smudge of acrid smoke—and endured the misery as best we could until it was light enough to work.”

The teamster of the chuck-wagon, which carried the bedding as well as the provisions, was also the cook. His only stove was a hole in the ground, and his utensils were of the simplest, yet he had to be able to prepare well-cooked and satisfying meals for anywhere from ten to twenty men. His day began early. He was generally roused by the night wrangler, for a hot and substantial breakfast must be ready, before dawn. It was his cry of “Come an’ get

it!" or, more rarely, "Come an' take it away!" that roused the camp.

But, not enough with being a good cook, it was necessary for him also to be a first-class teamster. His four horses were, often, not much more than half-wild broncos. There was no trail. The way to the round-up point might lead over the roughest country imaginable, crossed by gullies, skirting buttes where the ground was strewn with rocks, through quicksands and over bog holes, across rivers and up steep banks. A first-class teamster and first-class cook commanded his own price at a round-up. The "biscuit-shooter," or "cooky," or "cheffy," as he was variously called, was often an old-timer and well able to take care of himself.

The first day or two at the round-up point was generally a scene of wild excitement, for it was then, and only then, that the opportunity for skylarking arrived. A couple of days were allowed for all the various outfits to come in, and for the captain of the round-up to announce his plans. The head of each outfit, be he ranchman or cowboy, was known as the "foreman" of the outfit, and these foremen acted, by virtue of



"GINNING."



"CUTTING OUT."

Courtesy of Herbert Myrick.

A ROUND-UP IN OPERATION.

their capacity, as lieutenants of the round-up captain.

The latter, so far as his authority went, was a Czar. There was no disputing his orders, especially since the foreman of every outfit saw to it that his orders were obeyed. Dissatisfaction might be expressed, the following spring, at the Stockmen's Association, when a captain for the next year's round-up was to be chosen, but, on the ground, mutiny was out of the question.

There was, indeed, rarely any occasion for dissent, for the captain of the round-up was always an old-timer, a first-class cow-hand, and had been chosen because of his known ability to handle men. Moreover, he was not handling amateurs, but professionals, for the cowboy was a highly trained professional in his craft and only the best of them were sent to the round-up. They knew their business, and unswerving obedience to orders was one of a cowboy's characteristics.

The two days before the work began were often given to exhibitions of riding. If one of the riders had a particularly ugly buckner in his string, he would take the chance to ride him, for

the approval of the spectators if he stayed in the saddle or for the derision of his fellows if he had to hunt leather—or grasp hold of the horn of the saddle—or if he were thrown to the ground. Strictly speaking, there were no wild outlaws in the round-up saddle herd such as those now reserved for rodeos or frontier celebrations, for the simple reason that the horses each rider had brought to the round-up were there to work.

Horse-races—usually ridden bareback—and foot-races—usually run in full costume, including the cumbersome “chapps”—were invariable. Wrestling-matches occurred less frequently. Some one in some of the outfits was sure to have brought along a fiddle or accordion, and there was “dancing on the green.” There was also a good deal of rough practical-joking, but this was always kept within well-recognized bounds. When every man had a six-shooter at his belt, there was little idle quarreling.

It was this factor which brought about the highly characteristic speech of the plains. All cowboys did not speak the ornate and picturesque lingo with which they have been credited in some stories, and still less the weird and wild

and woolly dialect of cinematograph titles—they would have been laughed off the ranches if they had—but they did possess a habit of speech which was marked by a flow of imagery and a whimsical courtesy.

Far from being talkative, as a class, cowboys were silent and reserved, even among themselves. They rarely talked about women, and then with a chivalry which was based on the fact that old-timer Texans had stamped old-time Southern manners upon the whole cattle industry from the gulf to the Canadian border. Their staple of conversation—like that of any group of men engaged in the same business—was mainly about such subjects as the doings on local ranches, the conditions of the herds, the state of the fords at various rivers, and the minor incidents of the work.

“The moral tone of a cow-camp,” writes Roosevelt, “is rather high than otherwise. Meanness, cowardice, and dishonesty are not tolerated. There is a high regard for truthfulness and keeping one’s word,—intense contempt for any kind of hypocrisy, and a hearty dislike for a man who shirks his work. A cowboy will not submit tamely to an insult, and is ever

ready to avenge his own wrongs, nor has he an overwrought fear of shedding blood. He possesses, in fact, few of the emasculated milk-and-water moralities admired by the pseudo-philanthropists, but he does possess, to a very high degree, the stern manly qualities that are invaluable in a nation."

The two days of foregathering over, the round-up captain instructed each of his foremen what section of the district his men were to cover, word was passed that the work would begin in the morning, the teamsters were instructed as to the location of the next camping-ground, and the boys rolled into their blankets early. Preparation was over. The work of the round-up was to begin.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ROUND-UP

THREE o'clock in the morning.

"Come an' git it!"

The cries of the various cooks resounded through the camps. Shane, with the rest of the Pine Needle outfit, rolled out.

To that reveille there could be no delaying, for drowsiness was one of the Seven Deadly Sins of a cow-camp. Its penalty was dismissal, swift and sudden, and dismissal from a round-up meant disgrace.

The cowboys rolled out, drew on boots and trousers—if they had taken the latter off, which was by no means always the case—and, grouchy or pleasantly, according to the nature of the man, rolled up and tied the bedding, buckled on their chapps and lurched over to the chuck-wagon.

From the mess-box at the rear of the wagon, each man took a tin pannikin and tin plate,

knife, fork, and spoon. Into his cup he poured the sweetened tea or coffee—it was boiling hot, but soon cooled in that chill air—grabbed a couple of hot biscuits that had been cooked before dawn in a Dutch oven, and, probably, helped himself to a slice of fat pork. The old Texan custom, which allowed any outfit to slaughter for food a beef belonging to any other outfit, had, by this time, passed away.

Seven or eight minutes, rarely ten, were allowed for this meal, which, be it remembered, was eaten in the half-light of earliest dawn.

Then another cry rang out,
“Catch yo’ horses!”

The cowboy who had not finished his breakfast at that cry, never finished it. Tin cups, plates and the like must be chucked into the “round pan,” a tin dish-washing tub. Then, every rider, taking with him his rope—which might be of grass, hair, or plaited rawhide—went to the opposite side of the wagon from that where the fire had been made and breakfast eaten.

The night wrangler, meanwhile, had brought in the saddle-band, which he had been guarding all night.

One of the cowboys, the first who got there, quickly tied his rope to the hind wheel of the wagon, another fastened his rope to the end of that one, a third, a fourth, and even a fifth, while the same was being done from the front wheel, and the ropes were stretched out in the form of a V with the wagon at the smallest point. A rider held the rope at each joining and the wrangler drove the horses into the V.

The ends were then brought together, forming a rope corral, around which the horses moved restlessly, keeping as far away as possible from the men standing in the center.

In order to save time, the two or three best ropers in each outfit generally were bidden to rope the horse selected by each rider. For morning work, the toughest and strongest animals of each man's string were chosen.

The horses caught, the rope corral was dropped, every man coiled up his rope, and the horse-herd was turned over to the day wrangler.

The night wrangler got his breakfast, and, as often as not, rolled into his blankets there and then. Sometimes he gave the cook a hand, so that an earlier start could be made, and the chuck-wagon would lumber along to the next

camping-place, which was usually reached before ten o'clock, and the night wrangler might delay his sleep till then.

Meantime the riders were busy saddling their horses, sometimes an easy task, more generally, not. Some of the ponies had to be thrown before saddling, others blindfolded. All were dancing about, and many of them trying to buck their saddles off. As it was not yet sunrise, and the early morning air might be chill, this, of all times in the day, was the period calculated to make even a mild man swear. In case of trouble, though, every rider could always be sure of help from the other cowboys of his outfit, for it was a matter of pride to every outfit never to be late in gathering to the captain of the round-up, who surely was already in the saddle and waiting impatiently for the foremen and the boys to come.

There was really no need for instructions, since these had already been given to the foremen the night before, but they were always repeated. Four parties were laid out; one to take charge of the day herd, one to ride ahead of the day herd and drive any cattle that might be along the line of the round up march, one to

spread out to the right, and one to the left. On these circle bands fell the burden of the morning's work.

"Shane Ryder," said the captain, "yo' take the right circle. Take yo'r own outfit an' the Split Three. Turn at the little divide above the blue slough."

"Sure!" answered Shane.

He needed no more, nor did the riders. He struck off at a slow pace, "Pine Needle," "B Double 8," and the "Split Three" outfits following. The foreman of the "Split Three" rode up to him.

"Rough goin', ain't it?" he queried. "How about alkali?"

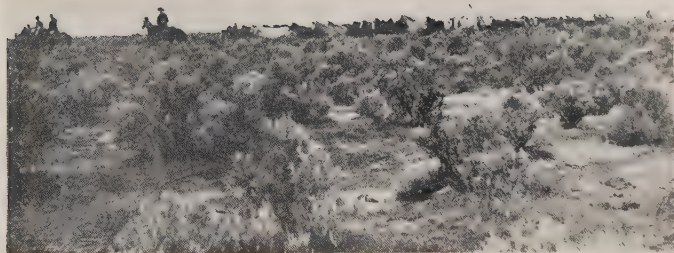
"Not much of it until we get near the blue slough," answered Shane. "I'm going to mosey to the left of it."

With Shane there were thus a score of riders. He knew, and they knew, just what had to be done. It was the duty of the leader of a circle band to gather in to the new camping place of the round-up, every head of cattle that lay between the line of march and the distant side limit of the district round-up, which in this case, was the Little Divide.

Such a limit might be anywhere between fifteen to thirty miles from the line of march. Hence, as Shane knew, it meant hard and fast riding. The foreman of the "Split Three" had been right, it was rough country.

A little more than two miles out, Shane detached two riders from his band, bidding them drive straight in to the new camp, driving ahead of them, of course, every head of cattle they could see. Three miles farther on, he detached another two, and, only half a mile further, in broken butte country, four men, and so on, until only two were left with him, these being chosen not by the ability of the men but by the toughness and speed of their horses. From Shane's circle band, there were thus eight or ten converging lines of riders. Arrived at the divide by the Blue Slough, Shane with the foreman of the Split Three and one of his riders, turned towards the camp, thus making the outside circle.

The circle riders, thus, may be seen as riding along the sticks of an outstretched fan, the outermost stick at one side being the line of march from the camp of the night before to the new camp on one side, and the outermost stick on the other, being the line of ride-in by the out-



Courtesy of Sunset Magazine.

BRINGING UP THE REMUDA.

Horse band, under the wranglers, coming to the round-up.



THE OUTSIDE CIRCLE RIDERS.

The last three of the circle, spreading out for the fanwise sweep to the main herd.

side circle leader. The center and inside circle leaders traveled more slowly.

On the open prairies such as those in parts of Nebraska, the round-up work was not so difficult, since the cattle can be seen at great distances, but in such rugged cut-up country as that in which Shane was working, with gullies, and coulees, and small cliffs everywhere, hunting cattle was difficult, for even a large herd could easily be hid in a hollow.

Circle riding in such country put a strain on the best man and the wiriest horse. It lay along steep ridges, over slippery cliffs, along winding ravines, up sliding slopes of talus, over jagged hills, across boggy creeks, over plateaux of rocks and sage-brush, through thorny chaparral, across the treacherously undermined ground of prairie-dog towns, and by hated alkali wastes.

In such country, the circle leader needed to be either an old and experienced hand or else a man with a natural topographic instinct. As he rode—and it was fast riding all the time—he directed each of his men to go down this ravine, to ride along that ridge, to dig down into certain coulees, to meander behind up-

standing buttes, in short, as he rode, he must grasp the lie of the country at a glance and detach his men in such wise that not a spot should be left uncovered. Patches of brushwood and stands of the sparse timber also must be searched. Thus, the inside circle riders, who did not have far to go, had a wide stretch to cover, which they must ride zig-zag; the center circle riders, one much narrower; and the outside circle riders little more than a straight line.

And, just as the country differed, so did the various types of animals. A bunch of Texas long-horns would stampede away, horns tossing and tails in the air, as soon as they saw a rider; animals of the type known as Western range stock drove with ease, though it was necessary to ride right up to them to get them started; but some of the short-horns and herds coming from the East knew nothing of the "hic-oo-oo" or Southwestern driving cry, but had to be turned by pistol shots.

As noon drew on, the inside circle riders, center circle riders and outside circle riders could be seen in the distance converging to a central point, the new camp, all driving herds of varying numbers before them. If the number of

animals gathered was small they were thrown into one herd and a score of men detailed to hold them. If it were large, the cattle were held in several herds.

Noon was the approximate time for dinner, but dinner on a round-up was not a leisurely meal. It was a case of bolting the greatest quantity of food in the shortest possible time, though it should be stated that cowboys were not hearty eaters. An overloaded stomach is not good for saddle work. But there was always plenty of food, hot, well-cooked and wholesome.

The day wrangler, by noon, had edged the saddle-band towards the wagon, and the roping of the morning was repeated, though in more irregular fashion, as all the circle riders did not come in at the same time, and each rider roped his own horse. For afternoon work, different ponies were used, not only because the horses of the morning were utterly tired out, but also because the afternoon work was entirely different in its character.

The herd, or herds, as the case might be, which had been brought in by the circle riders, were held in a compact bunch, the riders form-

ing a ring outside them. Then two men from any given outfit, who must be mounted on good cutting-out ponies, and who must themselves be good and quick brand-readers, rode into this bunch, and through and through it, to pick out the animals of their own brand. As the herd was shifting constantly, the animals weaving in and out, this was a task that called for the quickest and most experienced eyesight. More, when an animal was spotted, it took an incredible amount of skill to work that animal out to the side of the herd and out of the herd.

Then, from the slow sidling walk which had been used to get the animal out, it was necessary to use quirt and spur, for every beast would try its utmost to get back into the herd, and it must be kept away and headed off until it could be turned in the direction of the little herd of its own brand, kept a short distance away by the cowboys from the other outfits who were there for the purpose of holding the cut.

Cutting-out ponies learned their work to the full as completely as a sheep dog learns the handling of a herd. They soon saw what animal their rider was trying to turn, and, from that moment, they could be given a loose rein,

and would work the desired heifer or steer out to the edge of the herd by themselves.

Several cutting out ponies have become famous, and, on one occasion, in Texas, the owner of such a cutting-out pony bet a hundred dollars that his horse, once having been shown and made to recognize the animal chosen, would work him out of the herd and hold him from getting back to the herd, without any rider on his back. The bet was taken and the little pony succeeded three times in succession.

This cutting out work, was, then, the second part of the day's doings. The morning's work was to gather the herds, the first part of the afternoon's work was to cut out from the herds those belonging to the different brands. Naturally, the bulk of the animals belonged to the ranch on whose territory the round-up chanced to be. To pick out a dozen steers of a certain brand, from a herd of maybe a thousand, all moving around, and thoroughly to clean up the herd, so that none of strange brands remained in it was a task requiring the utmost quickness, skill, experience, patience, and "cow sense."

By the middle of the afternoon, therefore, the scene to an outsider looked like a wild confusion

of herds of different sizes, of bunches of cattle scattered here and there, with ever and anon one or more cattle trying to break away, and pursued by galloping cowboys. But this apparent appalling confusion was only outward. In reality, a well-handled round-up was a marvel of precision. It may be well to see what and why were all these various herds.

Suppose that six outfits were engaged in the round-up. At a certain given time in the afternoon, therefore, there would be thirteen herds, all of which must be kept separate. There would be, first of all, the great herd which had been brought in by the circle riders. Then there would be six cut-out herds, each containing animals of the brands which had been separated from the main herd, and there would be also six herds of cows and calves, also separated by their different brands.

These latter were separated for one of the most important features of the round-up—the branding and cutting of calves. When a cow, with a calf, was brought out of the main herd by the brand-readers on their cutting-out ponies, the calf invariably followed. This was taken as evidence of ownership.

On this first day, "Swiftly" and Shane cut out of the main herd five cows with calves. These cows belonged to the Pine-Needle Ranch, and were so branded, therefore the five calves also belonged to him. To mark that ownership it was necessary to brand the calves.

A large rope corral, made by the simple system of tying ropes together end to end and having them held at frequent intervals by the men, was made. A small but hot fire was lighted in the corner. While this was being done, the calves were cut out from the brand herd of cows and calves—not always an easy job, as the calves all wanted to rush back to their mothers. Once separated, the five calves belonging to cows of the Pine Needle brand were driven into the corral.

Waiting inside the corral were two expert ropers on horseback, one or two men with the branding irons, and a dozen or so men to "wrestle" the calves.

The work progressed with bewildering speed. A roper caught a bleating and frightened calf by the two hind-legs, took a twist with the lariat round the horn of the saddle, and dragged the little calf—now bawling at the top of his lungs—

in the direction of the fire. Two men grabbed the calf, one by the chin and foreleg, and the other by the hind-legs, the noose of the lariat was detached and the roper rode off to lasso another calf. The brander hurried over from the fire with the red-hot iron and in a few strokes the brand was put on, by which time, another calf was being dragged into place.

Such was branding at its simplest, but, in many cases, perhaps in most, especially where the cut-out brand herd of cows and calves was a large one, the rope corral was thrown around the herd where it stood, the fire was built in the corner, and the ropers roped the calves from among the cows. This was considerably quicker, but more dangerous, since, every once in a while, an old cow would turn vicious—and a charging cow is worse than a bull—and every one on foot would clear out of the corral in a hurry.

The ropers then got busy and, usually, it was only a matter of a few seconds before the vicious cow would be roped, thrown and tied, when the work proceeded.

“If there are seventy or eighty calves in a corral,” writes Roosevelt, “the scene is one of

the greatest confusion. The ropers, spurring and checking the fierce little horses, drag the calves up so quickly that a dozen men can hardly hold them; the men with the irons, blackened with soot, run to and fro; the calf-wrestlers, grimy with blood, dust and sweat, work like beavers; while, with the voice of a Stentor, the tallyman shouts out the number and sex of each calf. The dust rises in clouds, and the shouts, cheers, curses and laughter of the men unite with the lowing of the cows and the frantic bleating of the roped calves to make a perfect babel."

Additional excitement was furnished when there was a "maverick" as it was known in the south-west, or a "sleeper" as it was sometimes called in the north-west, to be branded. A "maverick" or "sleeper"—the former being the preferred term and still used on stock ranches—is an animal who has escaped branding on a previous round-up, and, since one, two, or even three years old, is no longer running with its mother. In the days of the open range, there was, therefore, no knowledge of ownership, and, in a round-up, the "maverick" belonged to the herd whose brand-readers had

been clever enough to cut the unbranded animal out of the day herd and place it with their own brand herd. "Mavericks" always tried to bolt, and, between the time of the gathering of a herd and the actual branding, a maverick might have changed owners three or four times, dashing from place to place and being now caught by the cowboys of one ranch, now by those of another. He, too, must be branded, and when a three-year old steer was let up on its feet, frightened and angry, the men afoot scattered and the men on horses had to be keenly on the watch.

It is often asked whence comes this word "maverick," which has passed into cow language as an accepted term for an unbranded animal. It arose during the period just after the Civil War. Sam Maverick, who was the owner of one of the largest herds of cattle in the district between San Antonio, Texas, and the coast, was, like most of the other ranch-owners of the Southwest, unable to pay any attention to his vast herds during the war, and, in consequence, for four years, the large increase of his herds went unmarked.

As it chanced, the year 1863 was one of a

severe drought, and the cattle wandered far and wide, seeking for pasture, and all trace of them was lost, since there was no round-up for four years. Mr. Maverick, of course, had the same privilege as any of the neighboring ranchers in finding and branding these cattle, but they had wandered so far that all could not be located. The ranchers for as much as a hundred miles on every side of him had been in the same fix, so far as branding their cattle during the War was concerned, but they were the gainers by the wanderings of Sam Maverick's cattle. Hence, when an unmarked cow or bull was found, it was regarded, as, possibly, having been a "maverick." Many a penniless cowboy became a ranchman by securing a herd of wild mavericks, which he roped, threw, and branded with his own brand.

In the days of the open range, there were always a certain number of these mavericks, since even the most cleverly managed round-up could not always gather every head of cattle in a district. A cow might have been calving on that very day, and be hidden and unwilling to move; or a small bunch of cattle might have been in a pocket or gulch and remained unobserved by the circle riders. As each herd was under the same

disadvantage of losing unbranded cattle in this way, and as each outfit had the same privileges of recapturing them at the round-up, the system that each should catch what he could, was perfectly fair and worked injustice to no one.

In cowboy lingo, the word "maverick" was also used for a man who rarely stayed more than a month or two with an outfit, and who was always out of work and wandering shiftlessly from place to place.

In this confusion of cutting out herds, branding calves, handling mavericks and the like, the round-up captain was here, there and everywhere. Occasionally, but rarely, there was a dispute about a brand, which had grown faint. No quarrelling was permitted. The matter was referred at once to the round-up captain, who ordered the animal roped, thrown and tied, and the hair shaved off, when the brand could be readily seen, and the captain's decision went unquestioned.

By evening, the thirteen herds—if there were six outfits running—were reduced to seven or eight. These consisted of the main herd, composed of the animals who were to be driven in the direction of the round-up; and of the six cut-



Courtesy of Herbert Myrick.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ROUND-UP.

Showing the division of the herds into several bunches just before branding begins.

out brand herds of each of the outfits. Should, however, the owner of any particular brand not have desired any of these animals for immediate sale—as was generally the case—they, together with the animals belonging to the ranch over whose range the day's circle-riding had been done, were turned back and driven a little distance to the rear, so that they would not interfere in the next day's proceedings, thus forming an eighth herd. This was a more satisfactory system, and was generally carried out, when practicable. When this was done, only two herds were left, that to the rear of the outfit, which had been cleaned up, and the herd which was being driven along the line of travel.

At eight o'clock in the evening, this driving herd—which during the day had been simply known as the day herd—became the night herd. Every outfit in succession undertook to watch herd for the night, the guard being divided into four watches of two hours apiece, two, and occasionally more, riders being assigned to guard the herd.

The first guard had to "bed down" the cattle. Generally this was a simple enough matter. It consisted of bunching the cattle closer and closer

together and riding round them steadily until they lay down and fell asleep. On a fine clear night, the animals would do so contentedly, soothed by the wailing "hic-oo-oo" of the guard, or, in many cases, by the songs and night chants of the cowboys—of which some are the most lugubrious songs ever heard, such as "Bury me not on the lone prair-ee, Where the coyotes may howl over me," etc.—or, which was much favored, old hymn tunes to which words had been put of topical cowboy interest.

In black, moonless, rainy weather, guarding the night herd was not only unpleasant, but might be dangerous and difficult. On such nights the cattle were restless, unwilling to lie down, and ready to stampede. The sudden approach of a coyote might produce this panic, even the scratching of a match when the night guard lighted a cigarette.

Then, as though an electric shock had run through the herd, every animal would be on his feet, horns and tail up, and start off in a wild stampede. If possible, they had to be headed and started to mill—that is, to run in a closely packed circle, with their heads all in to the center—by which means they could be held, but, if

they could not be held, no matter how rough the country nor how wild the night, the guards must stay with them, racing over unseen ground at a tearing gallop. Many a gallant cowboy has been badly hurt by falls in such riding, and, only the round-up previous to this one on which Shane was leading circle, one cowboy was killed by his horse putting his foot in a badger-hole, snapping off his leg, while the rider was thrown clear of the saddle, his head striking full against a jagged bit of rock.

Of one such night, at the round-up on the Little Beaver, Roosevelt writes: "On another occasion, while with the round-up, we were spared an excessively unpleasant night only because there happened to be two or three great corrals not more than a mile or so away.

"All day long it had been raining heavily, and we were well drenched, but towards evening it lulled a little, and the day herd, a very large one, of some two thousand head, was gathered on an open bottom. We had turned the horses loose and in our oilskin slickers cowered, soaked and comfortless, under the lee of the wagon, to take a meal of damp bread and lukewarm tea, the sizzling embers of the fire having about

given up the ghost after a fruitless struggle with the steady downpour.

“ Suddenly the wind began to come in quick sharp gusts, and soon it was driving the rain in stinging level sheets before it. Just as we were preparing to turn into bed, with the certainty of a night of more or less chilly misery in front of us, one of my men, an iron-faced personage, who no one would ever have dreamed had a weakness for poetry, looked towards the plain where the cattle were, and remarked,

“ ‘I guess there’s “racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,” now, sure.’

“ Following his gaze I saw that the cattle had begun to drift before the storm, the night guards being evidently unable to cope with them, while, at the other wagons, riders were saddling in hot haste and spurring off to their help through the blinding rain.

“ Some of us at once ran out to our own saddle-band. All the ponies were standing huddled together, with their heads down and their tails to the wind. They were wild and restive enough usually, but the storm had cowed them, and we were able to catch them without either rope or halter. We made quick work of sad-

dling, and the second each man was ready, away he loped through the dusk, splashing and slipping in the pools of water that studded the muddy plain. Most of the riders were already out when we arrived.

“The cattle were gathered in a compact, wedge-shaped, or rather fan-shaped mass, with their tails to the wind—that is, towards the thin end of the wedge or fan. In front of this wedge-shaped mass of frightened, maddened beasts was a long line of cowboys, each muffled in his slicker, and with his broad hat pulled down over his eyes, to shield him from the pelting rain. When the cattle were quiet for a moment, every horseman at once turned round with his back to the wind, and the whole line stood as motionless as so many sentries.

“Then, if the cattle began to overlap or to spread out at the ends, or made a rush and broke through a part of the lines, there would be a change into wild activity. The men, shouting, and swaying in their saddles, darted to and fro with reckless speed, utterly heedless of danger—now racing in to the threatened point, now checking and wheeling their horses so sharply as to bring them squarely on their haunches, or

even throw them flat down, while the hoofs ploughed long furrows in the slippery soil, until, after some minutes of this mad galloping hither and thither, the herd, after having drifted a hundred yards or so, would be once more brought up standing. We always had to let them drift a little to prevent their spreading out too much.

“The din of the thunder was terrific, peal following peal until they mingled in one continuous, rumbling roar, and at every thunder-clap louder than its fellows the cattle would try to break away. Darkness had set in, but each flash of lightning showed us a dense array of tossing horns and staring eyes.

“It grew always harder to hold in the herd, but the drift took us along to the corrals already spoken of, whose entrances were luckily to the windward. As soon as we reached the first, we cut off part of the herd and turned it within, and after again doing this with the second, we were able to put all the remaining animals into the third.

“The instant the cattle were housed, five-sixths of the horsemen started back at full speed for the wagons, the rest of us barely waited to put up the bars and make the corrals secure be-

fore galloping after them. We had to ride right in the teeth of the driving storm, and, once at the wagons, we made small delay in crawling under our blankets, damp though the latter were, for we were ourselves far too stiff, wet, and cold, not to hail with grateful welcome any kind of shelter from the wind and the rain."

During the fourth watch of the night herd was heard again the cry of the cook,

"Come an' get it!"

The night wrangler drifted the horses in, ready to turn them over to the day wrangler, the guards of the night herd stretched and yawned, getting ready to turn the herd over to the day guards when it would be known as the day herd, the riders grabbed mug and plate and snatched their hasty breakfast. The captain was already in the saddle. The dawn became gray, then lightened rapidly, and sunrise saw the circle riders already spreading out in two long lines on either side, ready to bring in another herd.

A new day of the round-up had begun.

CHAPTER XIX

. BARBED WIRE

THE storms of winter, the mud-holes of spring and the droughts of summer spelled loss to many a ranchman, but it was not they which put an end to the open range, nor was it even the gradual encroachment of the small granger, and later, the dry farmer. It was an enemy more insidious, more stealthy than these, which crept up, week by week, month by month, year by year, and first restricted and then blotted out the cowboy life of the great plains.

Barbed Wire!

The old-time cowboy is no more, the old-time life of the open range has passed away. The outward trappings still linger. In any of the big cow towns, one may still see the little ranch ponies coming in, with the big stock saddle with its double cinch, bestriden by men not greatly dissimilar from the old-timers, with broad sombrero, bright neckerchief, cartridge belt and six-

shooter, the distinguishing chapparejos, the high-heel boot and the big wheel spurs, for all these had a purpose.

While decorative, they were not so meant, originally, but were designed for stern utility. The sombrero shaded against the sun and shed the rain, the neckerchief could be used for hoppers, the gun was a necessity in frontier days, the chapps guarded the legs against thorn-bushes and chapparal generally, the high-heel boot gave a greater purchase on the ground when roping on foot, and the wheel-spurs were necessary on a stock saddle, where the stirrups lie far back and the grip is with the thigh, not the knee. Hence, being all of service, they are all still used, but their wearers are cowboys no longer, they are riders hired by a stock ranch.

The trail drivers, too, are gone. It is vain to look for herds of thousands of long-horn steers to come swinging up the Old Cow Trail from San Antonio, nor yet up the Colorado and California trails. They have gone, with the uncounted millions of buffalo, with the vast herds of elk, and with the passenger pigeons, whose numbers once clouded the sun, but of which there is not a single specimen existing. They have

gone as the "bull-whacker" and the "mule-skinner" have gone, and their names are but a memory, though a glorious one.

The wild Texas long-horned steer has almost gone, too. They were a rugged breed, rather to be classed as semi-wild than domesticated cattle. Yet they made the fortunes of the West, and though they were hard to fatten and harder still to handle, there is not a State in the cow country which would not do well to put up a monument in front of its Capitol in memory of the long-horned steer. They are not all gone, yet, but dwindling fast. Soon the breed will be almost as extinct as that of the wild cattle of Europe, of which there are but three herds kept in captivity.

What, it may be asked, has done all this? What has changed the face of the West so that it would be unrecognizable except to the eyes of an old Plains Scout? Again the answer is, "Barbed Wire!"

Just as it is said that all American weather comes from Medicine Hat, in Canada, so it may be said that all developments in the American cattle industry come from Texas. Barbed wire, the bane of the old-time cowboy and the blessing

of the modern stockman, came from Texas, too.

The first wire fence of any great length was erected in the year 1872 in the region lying between San Antonio and the Coast, a most desirable section in some regards, especially because seaports were developing not far away, providing at the same time an increasing home market and shipping points.

Texas, it is to be remembered, except in the western part of the state, had been less troubled with Indian raids than had, for example, the regions close to the Sioux country. It had, moreover, been settled for a much greater length of time. It was a state when the northern cow-country was divided into Territories, and its land laws were radically different from those which lay on the other side of that great barrier—the Indian Territory. In Central and Southern Texas—though not in Western Texas and the Panhandle—years of occupancy and, in a great many cases, purchase, had made the big ranchers the owners of the lands over which their cattle wandered.

As long as the ranges were not overstocked, a simple round-up, simpler than the one which has been described and in which Shane took a

part, was sufficient to hold the herds together and to do the necessary branding. But, after the Civil War, the ranches became overstocked, more and more ranchmen came in, and the owner of the land, seeing that there was a steady diminution in the pasturage for his own animals, closed it in.

At first, there was no serious objection, since those who began this restriction of the range were men of long standing in the community, and because there was always open range to be found farther west or farther north. But, as it continued, bad and bitter blood was raised and feuds began. Cattle-stealing, fence-cutting, personal duels and range riots called for the aid of the Texas Rangers, and peace was long in coming.

The first few years of barbed wire, therefore, had, as their immediate effect, the driving of many of the smaller ranchers out of Texas. Such took their herds up the Chisholm Trail and settled first in Kansas and Colorado, then in Nebraska and Wyoming, and finally in Montana and the Dakotas.

There the story was repeated, though with a difference, in that the government tried to hold

the land as much as possible for homesteading, rightly believing that a country prospered more with a large population cultivating the land intensively than with the scattered civilization of the type of the open range. But, in course of time, certain sections which were found unavailable for farming because there was so little rainfall and the soil was unproductive, were seen to be adapted only for stock-raising, and various modifications of the land laws were made, differing, somewhat, in every State. It became possible to lease and even to buy stock ranges, and some of these were of considerable extent.¹ Such ranges were enclosed with barbed wire.

Little by little, the pinch began to be felt. All the choice pasturage and the best water was under fence, and the ranchman who depended on the open range was at a considerable disadvantage with his comrades.

Then came about the question of cost. An unfenced ranch, of any size, would need at least three and probably more line camps, with two men on each, riding patrol to keep the cattle from straying. Suppose these men were paid

¹ As late as 1918 the author was on a ranch of over 100,000 acres in New Mexico.

only thirty dollars a month, that would mean \$2,160 annually in wages, for the line riders only, not counting the cost of their grub. Allowing the cost of a three-wire fence at \$150 per mile and that it would be necessary only to send hands occasionally to inspect and repair the fence, a rancher could build fourteen miles of fence just on what he would save in line-riders' wages in one year. Allowing for the irregularities of fence, that would enable him to enclose over 4,000 acres. A prudent rancher, who had capital in hand, could fence in 100,000 acres on what he would save in line camps, in the extra expenses of joining in big neighborhood round-ups, in the loss of mavericks and the like, in three years.

A fenced-in herd, however, soon suffers from inbreeding and, beginning in Texas—where some of the Southern owners had prided themselves on the possession of a small herd of pure-bred stock for many decades—there came about a rapid improvement in the stock. None of the scrubs was allowed to grow up as a bull, all became steers, and the herds were led not by a Texas Longhorn sire, but by a Shorthorn, an Angus, or a Hereford. The weeding-out proc-

ess continued rapidly, and, on many of the Western ranches, by the middle of the nineties, every Longhorn was got rid of and the more domesticated breeds established.

The importance of this was enormous. In the first place, it made more money for the rancher, since Herefords and Shorthorns fatten much more readily than the wilder Texan stock, though, on the other hand, they are not so hardy in winter weather as Longhorn stock which has become acclimatized. Therefore, on the fenced-in ranches, sheds were built for the protection of the cattle in blizzards or severe frosts, and these, again, required the cutting of hay so that the herds when under the sheds should not starve. The cutting of hay, in many instances, again brought about the necessity of growing it, if there were not enough wild hay on the place, and thus the stock-ranch began to take on the appearance of the stock-farm.

Another change which was brought about by the development from the open range to the stock-ranch and thence to the stock-farm was caused by the greater number of animals which could be raised on a given area. If there be no extra feed for winter, the pasturage will be

cropped too short and the cattle will not have enough food, but, if the food be sufficiently plentiful and the ground well occupied, then the manure which results from a large herd of cattle constantly enriches the ground. On many of these ranches, it became a part of the spring routine to scatter broadcast—where the grass was thin—some of the tougher pasture grasses, which, as they flourished, spread over the constantly enriched ground.

It is not to be understood that, even to-day, such a complete circle of improvement is universal. Far from it. Nine-tenths of the former open range, truly, is fenced, but it is only in the richer and better settled sections that pure-bred herds with shelter and winter feed have been established. Every year sees more of them, and ranch country which had been poverty-stricken even in the days of the open range because of the lack of water, now is rendered flourishing by means of water secured from artesian wells.

The barbed-wire fence both caused war and stopped war. It created hostility among the ranchers who were squeezed out of the open range, and not a few of these became the leaders



Courtesy of Herbert Stoops.

"But it's squeak! squeak! squeak!
Close and closer cramps the wire,
There's hardly play to back away
And call a man a liar,
Their house has locks on every door,
Their land is in a crate,
These ain't the plains o' God no more,
They're only real estate!"

Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

of recognized cattle stealing and horse stealing bands. They were not naturally "bad men," any more than the buffalo-hunters who had become the gunmen of twenty years before were "bad men," but they had neither the energy nor the capital to buy land and put up fences, nor had they enough breadth of mind to be able to change their point of view. To some of these men, a barbed-wire fence was "a hell-wire across God's country," as they termed it, and they regarded it as an infringement upon their privileges.

One of the worst of all these cattle-stealing outfits was "Billy the Kid's" gang, famous as having held the whole of Lincoln County, Texas, in a state of guerilla warfare, for years. A side-light is thrown on the character of the gang, when it is remembered that they were currently called the "man-killing fence-haters."

Billy the Kid was born in New York City in 1859, but, shortly after his birth, his widowed mother married again and went with Billy's stepfather to Santa Fé, New Mexico. When fifteen years old Billy killed a negro soldier as the result of a quarrel. Later in the same year he killed a blacksmith in Silver City, and skipped

out to Old Mexico to avoid arrest. He was an inveterate gambler, and in Chihuahua, Mexico, he killed and robbed a crooked Mexican monte dealer.

Having thus made the State of Chihuahua too hot to hold him, "Billy the Kid" went to Lincoln County, New Mexico, taking a job under an Englishman, named Tunstall. Now Tunstall had enemies, mainly the leader of a gang headed by "Noddy" Morton. This gang, in the spring of 1878, killed Tunstall.

At once, "Billy the Kid" swore never to rest until he had killed every man in Morton's gang who had been implicated in the killing of his friend and employer, Tunstall. With Tom O'Phalliard and ten others, he started open warfare throughout the county. It was not long until the list of killings became so outrageous that the Kid and his followers became hunted outlaws. In spite of the fact that there was a price on his head, Billy the Kid remained in that section until he had carried out his threat and killed Morton and six of his gang.

The story, from this point, may best be told by Chas. A. Siringo, the famous "Cowboy Detective":

“Sheriff Brady undertook the job of breaking up the ‘Kid’s’ gang and was killed by ‘Billy the Kid.’ He had shot him from behind an adobe wall, as he rode down the main street of Lincoln. As the sheriff lay on the ground, badly wounded, ‘Billy the Kid’ ran out from behind the adobe wall and shot him through the head.

“Now the whole county became a battleground, many good citizens joining the Kid’s gang. (This phrase needs explanation. It should be pointed out that many of the men killed by Billy the Kid were gangsters, too, such as Morton and his crowd. Local politics, too, played a part.)

“During this war, ‘Billy the Kid’ and a dozen of his men took refuge in Lawyer McSween’s residence in Lincoln. In the night they were surrounded by thirty-five ‘Seven River Warriors’ and two companies of United States soldiers, under command of Col. Dudley of the Ninth Cavalry.

“The McSween residence was set afire. When the fire became too hot, the ‘Kid’ and his party dashed out of the kitchen door, shooting as they ran. ‘Billy the Kid’ and Tom O’Phalliard were the only ones who escaped without a

scratch. Lawyer McSween lay dead with nine bullets in his body.

“The odds against Billy were too heavy, however, and he was captured, shortly afterwards, and tried in La Mesilla. There he was convicted of the murder of Sheriff Brady and sentenced to be hanged, on May 13, 1881.

“On the morning of April 28, while young Wall—a friend of Siringo and an eye-witness—was present in the room, Sheriff Pat Garrett, who was preparing to leave for White Oaks to have a scaffold made, remarked to the Kid’s two guards who were guarding him in the upstairs room of the Lincoln Court-house,

“ ‘Watch him carefully, boys, for he has only a few days to live, and might make a break.’

“Then Bob Ollinger, who had fought against Billy the Kid in the Lincoln County War, stepped to a closet, against the wall, and got his double-barrel shot-gun.

“Looking over towards the Kid, sitting on a stool, shackled and handcuffed, Ollinger said,

“ ‘There are eighteen buckshot in each barrel and I reckon the man who gets them will feel it. You needn’t worry, Pat, we will watch him like a goat.’

“With one of his good-natured smiles, the ‘Kid’ remarked,

“ ‘You might be the one to get them yourself!’

“Now Ollinger put the gun back in the closet and locked the door, putting the key in his pocket.

“About five o’clock that evening, Bob Ollinger and Charlie Wall took the other four prisoners across the wide street to the hotel for supper, leaving J. W. Bell alone to guard the ‘Kid.’

“While eating supper, Wall says they heard a shot fired in the court-house. They all ran out on the sidewalk. Ollinger ran toward the courthouse. In the middle of the street he met the frightened Mexican jailer, who said,

“ ‘Bell has killed the Kid!’

“Now Ollinger quit running and walked to the court-house. He had to go around to a side stairs, as there was no upstairs entrance from the front.

“When passing beneath an upstairs window, which was open, the ‘Kid’ called out,

“ ‘Hello, Bob!’

“Ollinger looked up and saw the ‘Kid’ with the shot-gun pointed at him. Then he said,

loud enough to be heard by Wall and the other prisoners across the street,

“ ‘Yes, he has killed me, too!’

“These words were hardly out of the guard’s mouth when a charge of buckshot went through his heart.

“A moment later, ‘Billy the Kid’ hobbled out on the small front porch. Around his waist were two belts of cartridges and two pistols. In his hands were the shot-gun and a Winchester rifle. These he had secured by kicking open the door to the gun-closet.

“Now the ‘Kid’ took aim with the shot-gun at the dead body of Ollinger, and fired, with the remark,

“ ‘Take that, you—! You will never follow me with that gun again!’

“He broke the gun in two and threw the pieces at the corpse.

“By this time the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street was lined with people who had run out of their houses, on hearing the sound of the shots.

“Here ‘Billy the Kid’ called to a Mexican, whom he knew, telling him to throw up a file. This was done, and the shackle chain was filed

apart in the center, leaving a shackle and piece of chain on each leg.

“Now the ‘Kid’ told the Mexican to put a saddle and bridle on the deputy County Clerk’s black pony—which formerly had been owned by the ‘Kid’—and bring him out on the street.

“This order was carried out.

“The ‘Kid’ now, after dancing a jig on the front porch, went to the side stairs, thence to the street, where the Mexican was holding the black pony.

“In trying to mount the pony, the ‘Kid’ being encumbered with the heavy load of guns and ammunition and still having the shackles dangling from each foot, the pony got loose and ran back to the stable in the courthouse yard.

“The crowd stood silent, watching.

“While waiting for the Mexican to bring the pony back, the ‘Kid’ stood in the street, holding the rifle ready for action. He would have been an easy target, had it not been that most of the men watching him were sympathizers. Wall says he could have killed him, but he wanted to see him escape.

“When the pony was brought back, the ‘Kid’ gave the Mexican his rifle to hold, while he

mounted. Now 'Billy the Kid' galloped west, waving his hat and shouting.

"The 'Kid' told the Mexican friend, who brought him the file and the pony, the secret of his escape. He had starved himself for more than a week, so that the handcuffs could be slipped off, he had practised in bed, slipping his hand in and out. By holding the hand in just a certain way, it could be managed.

"He said Bell was sitting in a chair, reading. Then he slipped his left hand out of the handcuffs and made a spring for the guard, striking him on the head with the iron cuff. Instead of Bell pulling his pistol, which was buckled around his waist, he threw both hands up to protect his head from another blow.

"Now the 'Kid' grabbed the pistol from the holster. Then Bell ran towards the head of the stairs, and, as he went to go down, the 'Kid' fired. The body went tumbling down the stairs, falling onto the Mexican jailer, who was sitting at the foot of the stairs. This stampeded the jailer, who ran out on the street where he met Ollinger, telling him that Bell had killed the 'Kid.'

"About July 1st, Pat Garrett received a let-

ter stating that the 'Kid' had lately been seen round Fort Sumner. . . . He took his two deputies John Poe and 'Kip' McKinnie. The sheriff said they would ride into Fort Sumner, after dark, and see Pete Maxwell, a wealthy sheep man, and the son of the famous 'Land Grant' Maxwell. The 'Kid' was in love with Pete Maxwell's sister, hence Garrett thinking that Pete might have seen him hanging around the house.

"Arriving in Fort Sumner, their horses were tied in an old orchard. Then they walked into Pete Maxwell's large, grassy yard. The residence was a long adobe building fronting south. Garrett knew the room in which Pete generally slept. The door of this room was open. The sheriff told his two deputies to lie down on the grass, while he went in to talk with Pete.

"Now the sheriff lay over on Mr. Maxwell's bed and began questioning him about the 'Kid.' No one outside of Mr. Garrett was to know what Pete told him.

"In the rear of the Maxwell dwelling lived an old Mexican servant, who was a warm friend of the 'Kid.'

"Previous to the arrival of the sheriff, 'Billy

the Kid' had entered this old servant's adobe cabin. The old man had gone to bed. 'Billy the Kid' lit the lamp, then pulled off his boots and began reading the newspapers of recent dates, which had been brought there for his especial benefit.

"After glancing over the papers, the 'Kid' told the old man to get up and cook him some supper, as he was very hungry, having just walked in from the sheep camp. The old servant told him he didn't have any meat in the house. Then the 'Kid' replied,

" 'I'll go and see Pete and get some,'

"Now he picked up a butcher knife from the table and started, barefooted and bareheaded.

"In walking along the porch of Pete's room, 'Kip' McKinnie saw him coming, but thought it was one of the servants. When nearly opposite Pete's room, 'Kip' raised up and his spurs rattled, which attracted the 'Kid's' attention. Pulling his pistol he asked in Spanish,

" 'Who's there? Who's there?'

"Not getting any answer, he backed into Pete's room, and asked,

" 'Pete, who's out there?'

"Maxwell didn't reply.

“Now the ‘Kid’ saw strange movements in the bed, and asked,

“ Who in — is here?”

“With the pistol raised in his right hand, and the butcher knife in his left, he began drifting across the room.

“Pete leaned over and whispered in the sheriff’s ear,

“ ‘That’s him, Pat!’

“By this time the ‘Kid’ had backed to the dim moonlight coming through the south window, which shone directly on him, making him an easy target for the sheriff. ‘Bang!’ went Garrett’s Colt, and down went the ‘Kid’ in his tracks, shot through the heart.”

The work of the sheriff, in those days of the Wild West, is rarely understood or appreciated. United States law makes a sheriff an officer with powers second only to the governor of the state, with plenary authority, and the right to compel any citizen to come to his aid for the sake of justice. The western sheriffs, often, were ruthless and stern, but the times called for such men.

Lawlessness marked the period of wire fencing. It was a belief in those days that “every hundredth post hole was a grave,” and

it went so far that there came about a class of desperate men, who called themselves "fighting cowboys" and who, like mercenary soldiers, would hire out at high wages either to the fence-builders or the fence cutters. Such lawless hostility could not stop the steady encroachment of barbed wire, and, with the enclosing of most of the better parts of the open range, came the end of the old cowboy days.

At the same time, the barbed wire fence put an end to the very serious Sheep and Cattle war which, in the early eighties, cost over two hundred lives and uncounted thousands of head of sheep and cattle.¹ Cattle will not graze where sheep have been, the woolly herds make the ground smell so strong, and besides, sheep crop the grass so close that they ruin a range. Fencing, however, both for the cattle and the sheep pastures—coyote-proof fences in the latter case,—did a great deal to put an end to hostilities, since no sheep could graze on land fenced in for cattle.

Yet it must never be forgotten that while barbed wire made the stock-ranch and the

¹ For some features of the Sheep and Cattle War, the reader is referred to "The Boy with the U. S. Foresters," by this author.

stock-farm, it abolished the old open range and the cowboy days. The sentiment of the old-timer is well expressed in the last two verses of "The Cowboy's Grave":

When my old soul hunts range and rest
Beyond the last divide,
Just plant me on some strip of west
That's sunny, lone, and wide.

Let cattle rub my headstone round,
And coyotes wail their kin,
Let hosses come and paw the mound,
BUT—don't you fence it in!

CHAPTER XX

A RODEO OF TO-DAY

THE advent of the barbed-wire fence, with its accompanying improvement in the grade of range stock, its establishment of well-built houses, winter sheds for the cattle, haying and the like, marched hand in hand with the development of the country in general.

No longer was the granger an avowed and open enemy of the cow-man, no more would the "fool-hoe-man," as he was sometimes called, be ignominiously put in the same class as the sheep-herder. On the contrary, stock-ranchers were beginning to realize that there would be no cattle industry in the Far West if it were not for the farmer of the Middle West. With fenced ranches, where a larger return per head was necessary because the margin for loss was so much decreased, ranchers began to think of raising beef cattle on the ranches, an idea absolutely unknown in cowboy times.

Range cattle were never fat. They varied

from a skeleton stage in the late winter and early spring to fair condition during the summer. True, they were raised with the intention of being eventually sold for beef, but they were not, as a matter of rule, directly sold for beef. The flesh of a range-raised long-horn steer, in poor condition, was hardly eatable. Besides, livestock being sold by weight on the hoof, representatives of the packers did not want to buy for the weight of a bag of bones.

Accordingly, the buyers who went to Abilene, later to Dodge City, and later to the many shipping points which arose as the railroads were extended, were not buyers for the packers, but buyers for another class of stock-raisers, known as feeders. Thus, while in the early days, a Texas steer sold in Texas for \$10 and after three months on the trail sold to a buyer for \$25, that buyer would ship it to a feeder—perhaps in Iowa, Indiana, or Illinois—for \$35 and the feeder would fatten it and sell it for \$60 or more according to weight.

Why would it not be possible for a rancher whose stock-ranch was favorably situated, with some farming land on it, to grow rough feed—velvet beans, alfalfa and the like,—to fatten up

his own cattle and sell direct to the packers?

Shane was among the earliest of the ranchers in his vicinity to realize the possibility of this, but the Pine Needle Ranch, while suitable enough for the conditions of the open range, as when he took it up in 1878, was not suitable for a feeding range.

Ten years had passed since Shane first took up land, and, as he grew older, he thought more and more of the south. For the last three years his mother, now an old lady, had been living with him on the ranch, but the winters were cold and dreary. His mind turned back to New Mexico, where he had spent nearly seven years on Kit Carson's ranch. He knew that country well and saw its possibilities. He knew that land could be secured there at a reasonable figure and he knew that the increase in calves was bigger in the south than in the north.

The more he thought of it, the more he liked the plan, and, one fine day, a prospective buyer having come to the Pine Needle Ranch, Shane sold out the ranch just as it stood, for a good round sum, and found himself once more at Las Vegas, which, as he knew, had become the center of the New Mexico cow country.

Shane was comparatively wealthy, now, and a man who knew the cattle business from end to end. He found friends and acquaintances among the old-timers, at once meeting men who had driven on the old Cow Trail, men who had punched cattle on the open range, even one of the old scouting companions of Carson.

Since he had the ready cash to pay, it was not hard to find a good ranch, for there are always some for sale, generally those which have been taken over by some enthusiastic Easterners who believe that the cattle business takes no learning and promptly lose the greater part of their investments.

After some weeks given over to inspecting various places, Shane bought a ranch of 50,000 acres, turned the rougher sage-brush section over to a range herd, and commenced his pure-bred herd and his feeding plans in the lower section, where were rich valleys and bottom lands.

Thirty years had passed since Shane came down from the Hudson Bay Post with "Coontail," and he entered this new phase of the cattle industry with many years of experience in handling cattle behind him. Paulo, an old man now, was still the wealthy ranchman's friend, and no

one had more influence and more respect among the Mexican population than had Shane. The Indians, too, remembered him as a comrade of "Father Kit," whose reputation for square dealing continues among the Southwestern Indians to this day.

Some years later, Shane's mother died, and not long after, the sturdy ranchman brought a bride to the ranch-house, a modern structure, not the rough log shack of former days. In keeping with the country, he had built a big rambling adobe house in the Mexican style, to which nothing is to be compared for comfort in the New Mexico climate.

To add to Shane's stake, as the years passed on, two sons came, who, as they grew older, took their first lessons in roping from a wizened old Mexican, whose skinny arms, however, were not too weak to have lost all their cunning, and who, though nearly eighty years of age, could toss a rope with the best. This was Paulo.

When, therefore, as the years rolled by, the old-timers began to deplore that the rising generation of cowboys would have seen but little of the life of the old days, Shane was one of the foremost to aid in getting up "frontier cele-

brations” and “Cowboys’ Reunions,” or, as they are generally known in that section of the cattle country—rodeos.

In one of the largest and most strictly cowboy of these—the annual rodeo held at Las Vegas—Shane’s eldest son was one of the contestants, and Shane himself, a man of sixty, was one of the judges.

The Las Vegas of to-day is changed. It is well built, with large stone buildings, and well paved. It looks what it is, a prosperous American city. Only in the more Mexican city of Old Las Vegas is some of the old character to be found. Gone are the saloons, the gambling joints, the dance-halls. No cowboy gallops in to “shoot up the town,” or rides his horse in to the bar while he takes a drink.

The rodeo begins with a procession of all the contestants, picturesque enough in full cowboy rig. First through the new town, then the old, and out to the rodeo grounds.

This is like any race-track ground, with grandstand and track and the great open grassy space in the middle, but it differs in that on the farthest side from the stables are built a series of massive and stout corrals. These are for

388 THE BOOK OF COWBOYS

the outlaw horses which are to be ridden, the wild steers which are to be bull-dogged, and the goats which are to give the ropers an opportunity to show their skill. One corral is for the saddle-ponies, though most of these, now, not being range-wild, are housed in the stables.

The outlaws to be ridden in the bronco-busting contests are a different breed from the old broncos, and the riding is different. The everyday work has become a sport. In the old days, every horse had to be broken, but some were more unmanageable than others. In modern days, a horse which shows too many vicious traits, or is prone to bucking in peculiarly vindictive fashion, is sold as an "outlaw" to one of a small group of men who make a business of supplying these rodeos with the worst brutes to be found. Thus a ferociously bucking bronco becomes valuable property in proportion to his unmanageability. Hence a rider is required only to stay a bucking animal for half a minute, not to stay with him until the brute is tamed.

True enough, the old-time cow-punchers shake their heads sadly and refer to the bronco-busting of the old days. But, with these picked out-

law horses, many a rider gets thrown or "hunts leather" before the thirty seconds are over.

Moreover, most of these outlaws are saddled and bridled in a chute, and the "buster" steps from overhead into the saddle, the gates being opened at the same moment and the bucking mad creature darts out into the field.

(Some of these beasts are dangerous, and at the Las Vegas rodeo in 1918 the author, running up to photograph one of the worst of them in the act of rearing was suddenly turned upon by the furious creature, which ran at him, mouth open, despite the rider on his back and reared up, striking down and forward with his powerful hoofs. A quick jump backwards saved a blow which might have killed, and the outlaw's hoofs came down at the author's feet in a muddy pool splashing him from head to foot and muddying the camera lens so that further pictures of the animal were impossible. It was a narrow enough escape.)

A steer, with a belly-band tightly cinched, also must be ridden, but as there is neither saddle nor stirrups and as a bucking steer will jump with an even more variegated movement than a horse, it is not long before the rider goes rolling off in the grass.

The rodeos also have roping and tying contests. A steer is let out from the gate and when

about twenty yards ahead, the word is given and the cowboy must rope, throw, and tie the steer's feet, either side-lined, or the two feet on one side; hopped, or the hind feet tied; or hog-tied, which means three feet. For this, a minute is considered slow, and, at this rodeo, the best time was $26\frac{1}{2}$ seconds.

Bull-dogging is the most dangerous and the best-beloved of these sports. In this a steer is set galloping at full speed, the cowboy after him. A quick cow-pony will soon catch up on a steer, and, just at the moment that the pony forges beside the steer, the rider must throw himself from the galloping horse to the neck of the galloping steer, grasping the horns in such a way as to turn the animal's head, then, throwing himself to the ground, by main force he must twist its neck and drag the steer over to the ground, taking care that he does not get the horns pinned in his body while doing so.

Goat-roping is a favored amusement, and some goats have such an uncanny knowledge of the exact moment when the noose is about to settle over their horns that the rider who has received that particular goat by lot, may have to make three or four casts. At this rodeo, there



Photographs by the author.

ALL SIX FEET OFF THE GROUND.

Extraordinary photograph showing the steer bucking, throwing the rider clear, and caught by the camera while both animal and man were in the air.



HOLDING HIS SEAT.



JUST BEFORE THE FALL.

STEER-RIDING.

was one black goat which never was roped, and trotted over the field contentedly, after the disgusted cowboy had thrown and thrown again without result.

Such contests are the life of the rodeo of to-day, and are watched with delight and applauded by thousands. Still, they are but a slight memory of the old cowboy times, when bronco-busting was all in the day's work and when a knowledge of roping was indispensable. The old-time cowboy is like the windjammer sailor, a relic of days gone by.

And, as, after the rodeo, Shane rode back to his stock-farm, he thought how different life was now from that of the old cowboy days, and how, in his own life, it had chanced that he had witnessed the entire development of the Western cow-country, how, indeed, his own life had been, in a sense, an epitome of the West.

He remembered his father, a fur trapper of the old days with the Hudson Bay Company, and the half-breeds, French and Indian, who worked under the grim old Scotch factor, McTavish. He thought of "Coon-tail," and the Forbidden Country, and realized how such men, much of the same type as Daniel Boone, had been the

first far-flung advance-guards of civilization.

He thought of the journey along the Missouri and down the Musselshell, and of his capture by the Blackfeet. He lived over again that never-forgotten winter of his boyhood, when the Indians were still upon their hunting grounds, and when it was necessary for the United States government to make treaties with the tribes in order to secure the redskins' permission to allow white travelers to cross their lands. He thought, and with sadness, of the disappearance of that race, swept from the prairies by the remorseless greed of civilization.

He thought of the Mormons, persecuted in the Eastern States, and of their daring and magnificent trek across unexplored wilderness to found a new state which had become rich and prosperous. He thought of the old Agent of Vengeance in the Danite band, and then of Lot Smith, as he had last seen him, a patient hard-working farmer, engaged in that grand task of turning the wilderness into a garden.

He thought of the groaning wagons hauled by the long lines of oxen and of mules, which were the freight transportation of those days, and of the gallant Pony Express, and mourned

to think how few of those riders were still alive.

He thought of the eleven millions of buffalo which roamed the cattle country, when he was young, and of the thousands which fell to Buffalo Bill's rifle alone, and it seemed pitiful to think that three or four small herds, in semi-captivity, as in Yellowstone Park, should be all that remained.

He thought of the days of the Civil War and of his old boss, Kit Carson, the last of the great frontiersmen and scouts, and rejoiced to remember that his had been the hand which had held the ranch together during the troublous days after "Smash" disappeared.

He thought of the Old Cow Trail and how it crossed that grim barrier of the Indian Territory to bring the whole cattle industry into the western States, and he felt a great and a glad pride that he had been one of the first to go up that old and revered trail.

He thought of the cowboy days, the long stretching rides for days together where never a granger had set his plow nor a miner his pick, where never a wheel had rolled nor a woman had trodden, where only the gallant range-rider of the plains had his home. He thought of the

blazing noons, and the blizzard-riven nights, of the months of solitude, of the strenuous comradeship, of the round-up, and he realized that, as long as America endures, the cowboy period will be an epic of her history.

He thought of the gradual oversweeping of the country by the barbed-wire fence, by the farmer, by the schoolhouse, by the small town, by cities stamped with the American spirit, and of the vast share that the cattle industry had played and is playing in shaping and strengthening the destinies of the United States.

And, as he stood there looking over the sagebrush to the distant mountains, purple-blue against the gold of the setting sun, he took off his hat reverently as he thought of that gallant company of quirt and spur who had gone across the Great Divide.

THE END

U. S. SERVICE SERIES

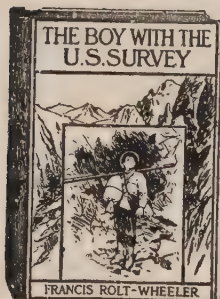
By FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

Illustrations from photographs taken in work for U. S. Government

Large 12mo Cloth \$1.75 each, net

"There are no better books for boys than Francis Rolt-Wheeler's
'U. S. Service Series.'"—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. SURVEY



THIS story describes the thrilling adventures of members of the U. S. Geological Survey, graphically woven into a stirring narrative that both pleases and instructs. The author enjoys an intimate acquaintance with the chiefs of the various bureaus in Washington, and is able to obtain at first hand the material for his books.

"There is abundant charm and vigor in the narrative which is sure to please the boy readers and will do much toward stimulating their patriotism by making them alive to the needs of conservation of the vast resources of their country."—*Chicago News*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. FORESTERS

THE life of a typical boy is followed in all its adventurous detail—the mighty representative of our country's government, though young in years—a youthful monarch in a vast domain of forest. Replete with information, alive with adventure, and inciting patriotism at every step, this handsome book is one to be instantly appreciated.

"It is a fascinating romance of real life in our country, and will prove a great pleasure and inspiration to the boys who read it."—*The Continent, Chicago*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. CENSUS

THROUGH the experiences of a bright American boy, the author shows how the necessary information is gathered. The securing of this often involves hardship and peril, requiring journeys by dog-team in the frozen North and by launch in the alligator-filled Everglades of Florida, while the enumerator whose work lies among the dangerous criminal classes of the greater cities must take his life in his own hands.

"Every young man should read this story from cover to cover, thereby getting a clear conception of conditions as they exist to-day, for such knowledge will have a clean, invigorating and healthy influence on the young growing and thinking mind."—*Boston Globe*.

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of
price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

U. S. SERVICE SERIES

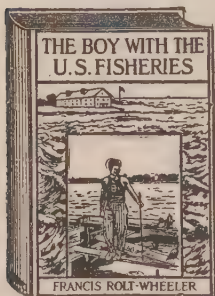
By FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

Many illustrations from photographs taken in work for U.S. Government

Large 12mo Cloth Net \$1.75 per volume

"There are no better books for boys than Francis Rolt-Wheeler's 'U. S. Service Series.'"—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. FISHERIES



WITH a bright, active American youth as a hero, is told the story of the Fisheries, which in their actual importance dwarf every other human industry. The book does not lack thrilling scenes. The far Aleutian Islands have witnessed more desperate sea-fighting than has occurred elsewhere since the days of the Spanish buccaneers, and pirate craft, which the U. S. Fisheries must watch, rifle in hand, are prowling in the Behring Sea to-day. The fish-farms of the United States are as interesting as they are immense in their scope.

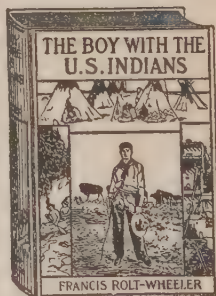
"One of the best books for boys of all ages, so attractively written and illustrated as to fascinate the reader into staying up until all hours to finish it."—*Philadelphia Despatch*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. INDIANS

THIS book tells all about the Indian as he really was and is; the Menominee in his birch-bark canoe; the Iroquois in his wigwam in the forest; the Sioux of the plains upon his war-pony; the Apache, cruel and unyielding as his arid desert; the Pueblo Indians, with remains of ancient Spanish civilization lurking in the fastnesses of their massed communal dwellings; the Tlingit of the Pacific Coast, with his totem-poles. With a typical bright American youth as a central figure, a good idea of a great field of national activity is given, and made thrilling in its human side by the heroism demanded by the little-known adventures of those who do the work of "Uncle Sam."

"An exceedingly interesting Indian story, because it is true, and not merely a dramatic and picturesque incident of Indian life."—*N. Y. Times*.

"It tells the Indian's story in a way that will fascinate the youngster."—*Rochester Herald*.



For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

U. S. SERVICE SERIES

By FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

Many illustrations from photographs taken in work for U. S. Government

Large 12mo Cloth Net, \$1.75 each

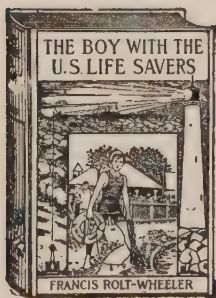
"There are no better books for boys than Francis Rolt-Wheeler's 'U. S. Service Series.'"—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. EXPLORERS

THE hero saves the farm in Kansas, which his father is not able to keep up, through a visit to Washington which results in making the place a kind of temporary experiment station. Wonderful facts of plant and animal life are brought out, and the boy wins a trip around the world with his friend, the agent. This involves many adventures, while exploring the Chinese country for the Bureau of Agriculture.

"Boys will be delighted with this story, which is one that inspires the readers with the ideals of industry, thrift and uprightness of conduct."—*Argus-Leader, Portland, Me.*

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. LIFE SAVERS



THE billows surge and thunder through this book, heroism and the gallant facing of peril are wrought into its very fabric, and the Coast Guard has endorsed its accuracy. The stories of the rescue of the engineer trapped on a burning ship, and the pluck of the men who built the Smith's Point Lighthouse are told so vividly that it is hard to keep from cheering aloud.

"This is an ideal book for boys because it is natural, inspiring, and of unfailing interest from cover to cover."—*Marine Journal*.

THE BOY WITH THE U. S. MAIL

HOW much do you know of the working of the vast and wonderful Post Office Department? The officials of this department have, as in the case of all other Departments covered in this series, extended their courtesy to Dr. Rolt-Wheeler to enable him to tell us about one of the most interesting forms of Uncle Sam's care for us.

"Stamp collecting, carrier pigeons, aeroplanes, detectives, hold-ups, tales of the Overland trail and the Pony Express, Indians, Buffalo Bill—what boy would not be delighted with a book in which all these fascinating things are to be found?"—*Universalist Leader*.

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt
of price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

MUSEUM BOOKS

By FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

Illustrated from photographs, many of which are furnished
by the American Museum of Natural History
Large 12mo Cloth Decorated cover Price, \$1.75 each

THE MONSTER-HUNTERS

THIS is a story of thrilling adventure, and through its pages writhe or thunder those vast and uncanny monsters that inhabited this world long ago.

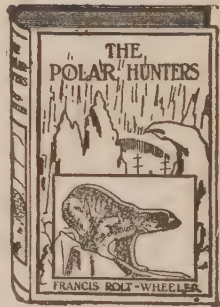
While exploring in the Sahara desert for skeletons of primitive whales the boy hero is the victim of an engulfing sandstorm, and adventures crowd in upon him in our own wild Wyoming waste. The youthful paleontologist unlocks the gate to a new world, yet never ceases to be a boy.

"The author entertains his readers with thrilling adventure, at the same time creating a desire to follow up the subject—a gift most story-tellers lack. Some book!"—*Philadelphia Dispatch*.

THE POLAR HUNTERS

THE "Frozen North" always fascinates as a subject, and in no other book has so haunting a picture been drawn of Eskimo life. Strange fights with walrus and polar-bear on the sea, ice perils from drifting floes and crashing bergs, and the constant fight against hunger, cold and darkness, give this book a glamor as great as is its wealth of information.

"The book is an ideal one for boy readers, filled as it is with valuable information, and of unfailing interest from beginning to end."—*Zion's Herald, Boston*.



THE AZTEC-HUNTERS

THE true romance of a vast and powerful American civilization, which flourished more than a thousand years before Columbus landed, is here told, absolutely for the first time. Forty cities, as large as those of modern times, have been snatched from the jaguar-haunted jungle to tell the story of a great commercial empire, comparable to those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

"Not only will boys be held spellbound by this absorbing tale, but adults will also find this well-written narrative intensely interesting and full of the latest light shed by science upon a subject of perennial interest."—*New York Herald*.

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., Boston, Mass.

Western
Americana

F Rolt-Wheeler, Francis William, 1876-
596 The book of cowboys, by Francis Rolt-Wheeler;
R755 with 33 illustrations from photographs, sketches
and early prints. Boston, Lothrop, Lee & She-
pard Co. [1921],
394p. illus. 24cm.

1.Cowboys. I.Title.



3 5132 00238 0046
University of the Pacific Library

WITHDRAWN

